

— PERRY-GORE (George) The Story of the Ancient
Parochial Chapelry of St. Mary's, Oldham; illustrated, or
8vo, cloth boards, 3/-.

Oldham, 1906

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WHEREON TO LOOKE
IS BETTER TO ME THAN GOLDE"

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THE OLDHAM CHAPELRY.

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THE OLD CHAPELRY, N.E.

By Mr. Tom Heywood.

THE STORY OF

THE ANCIENT PAROCHIAL CHAPELRY

OF
S. MARY'S, OLDHAM.

BY
GEORGE PERRY-GORE,
VICAR OF S. MARY'S,
OLDHAM.

QUINCENTENARY YEAR, 1906.

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DEDICATED TO
THE WARDENS AND CHURCH WORKERS
OF OLDHAM CHURCH,
AND PARTICULARLY TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS,
THE ASSISTANT CLERGY, BETWEEN
1893—1906:

John W. Locker.	Thomas W. Bradburne.
Reginald H. Harvey.	Æneas R. Mackintosh.
Eldon O. Butler.	Christopher K. Blencowe.
Edward A. Sydenham.	Sydney H. A. Embling.

THE STORY OF AN ANCIENT PAROCHIAL CHAPELRY.

INTRODUCTION.

This year of 1906 to 1907 has been chosen to celebrate the Quincentenary of the Dedication of Oldham Church, because in the year 1406 distinct evidence of the existence of a chapel is found, but there is no desire by this choice of date to prejudice the great probability of the existence of an earlier church ; indeed, the recent examination of certain documents appear to establish this almost without doubt.

We regret that the facts which establish the earliest antiquity of the Church are so meagre, and that it is necessary to depend so much upon inference and conjecture. At the same time it is important to collect into permanent form as much of the history of the ancient chapelry as possible, lest in time what is now known should also become obscure and forgotten. And so the present aim is to collect into consecutive order the fragmentary facts about the past, and to tabulate as far as possible all matters which find their focus in the Ancient Church of Oldham.

Oldham, as one of the great towns of the country, has yet to make her history, and so far as she possesses a past it is inevitably threaded into the ecclesiastical life of the past centuries.

But as these investigations have been pursued it

has been distressing to discover what little care has been bestowed in the past upon collecting and preserving matters of ecclesiastical interest, and how wilfully, almost, church property has become scattered and alienated, and it is hoped that if no other purpose is served by this effort, at least it will effectually tabulate the custody and possession both of past and present properties of ecclesiastical and antiquarian interest.

It is a matter for general interest and of particular gratification to the present writer that it has been possible to trace and restore to the custody of the Church authorities several Church properties of considerable interest, and the generous example of the late possessors of these "church goods" it is hoped may be followed by others into whose hands certain properties sanctified by religious use may have come.

It is impossible to compile any facts with regard to ancient matters in Oldham without considerable indebtedness to histories written by the Butterworths, Booker's Memorials of Prestwich, and the industrious labours of Mr. Samuel Andrew and Mr. Giles Shaw, and to both the last named gentlemen I am much indebted for both personal courtesy and help.

Besides these, I owe much help to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bristol, the Rector of Prestwich, Mr. Berry, Librarian of the Oldham Free Library, the Revs. J. H. Kidson, S. H. A. Embling, Mr. Albert Newton, and Mr. Thomas Stubbs, Parish Clerk.

GEORGE PERRY-GORE.

St. Mary's Vicarage,
1906.

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THE OLDHAM CHAPELRY.

I.

THE HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT CHAPEL AND CHAPELRY.

When Mr. J. Butterworth wrote his first history of Oldham in 1817 he describes the ancient chapelry as extending to the parishes of Rochdale and Middleton on the north, to Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne on the south, to Ashton and Saddleworth on the east, and to Prestwich and Middleton on the west, and as these were all ancient parishes there is no doubt these were the boundaries of this extensive chapelry.

Until the early part of the 18th century this large stretch of country side was but thinly populated, and, indeed, so recent and rapid has been the growth of this present populous centre of industry (150,000) that the present writer has ministered to an old parishioner who could recall the days of Oldham with one policeman to keep the peace and one postman to deliver the letters, and many are the inhabitants still surviving who can tell you of the trout they caught in the local streams and the primroses they gathered from the sheltered banks.

So when an Oldham churchman in the early part of the 18th century halted on his way home from church on the top of Oldham Edge he would be surrounded by a magnificent panorama of varied scenery. Looking towards the north the horizon would be outlined by the bold hills of Rossendale and Pendle, turning to the east

and north-east the whole landscape would be closed in by the lofty peaks of the Pennine Range, whilst looking south and south-west there would be displayed in a far-extending plain the wooded coppices and pastoral plains which stretched beyond Middleton, Prestwich and Manchester from 20 to 30 miles, and if he lingered to observe the chief features of the landscape he would see clearly disclosed the ancient homes of the few families, who were successively the owners of the land, and lords of the manor of the properties in the ancient chapelry.

In the near township of Royton he would discern the ancient hall of the Byrons, in the further distance the old home of the Asshetons (but now of the Hortons) at Chadderton, still further south the hall of the Radcliffes at Foxdenton, and near by, at Werneth, the old hall of the Cudworths; and beautifully wooded and fair would this wide stretch of undulating country appear, for difficult as it is to imagine now, old chroniclers of this period record how thousands of oaks, ashes, alders, and birches were sold in the neighbourhood at this period, whilst until quite recently traces of the imposing avenue of elms survived, which stretched from Chadderton Hall to Oldham Church, beneath which successive generations of the Asshetons and Hortons passed along to their worship in the ancient church.

THE RELATION OF THE CHAPELRY TO PRESTWICH.

The exact relationship of Oldham to Prestwich has often been a matter of discussion and sometimes of contention, but so far as authentic history helps us, and as the very term chapelry implies, we must conclude

that Prestwich is the mother and Oldham the daughter of that ancient and important parish. As far back as the thirteenth century, c. 1280, we find in an old deed preserved at Prestwich, and transcribed by J. E. Bailey, F.S.A., that one "Hamo de Oldham," a member of the family who were lords of the manor of that place, "For the good of his soul, and for the consolation he had derived from the offices of religion at the chapel on his manor, served by clerics appointed by the Rector of Prestwich, made over to one of his neighbours a piece of land in the township of Chadderton, near Oldham, and in the parish of Prestwich-cum-Oldham, subject to an annual payment of three silver pence, to be paid on the Feast of the Assumption of the B.V.M. to the Church of the Blessed Mary of Prestwich"; and to this deed William Scherewind, chaplain (one of the priests of Prestwich, and probably serving the chapelry of Oldham), was one of the witnesses.

"To all the sons of our holy mother, the church, to whom this present writing shall come, HAMO, son of Richard DE OLDUM, (sends) greeting everlasting in the Lord God.

"Let all know that I, moved by divine charity for the health of my soul and of the souls of all my predecessors and successors, have given and granted, and by this my present charter have confirmed to JOHN, son of Geoffrey DE CHADIRTON, and his heirs, a certain piece of my land in the district of Oldum, namely, all my portion of land of le Longelee, with the homage of Roger, son of Ralph de Glothick, and for the same service of Roger two pence half-penny, which the said Roger was wont to pay me annually at (the feast of) the Assumption of the Blessed Mary (15th August) for his portion of Le Longelee, within these bounds: From the ditch (or wall) up to Wastell, and so from the said Wastell up to

Glothick brock, and so going down from Glothick brock up to Longelache clough, and so going up Longelache clough up to Wastell, which is a bound between Oldum and Wernith, and so from that Wastell up to Haselinechawe clough, and so from Haselinechawe clough up to Menegate, and so directly up to the said ditch (or wall), with all its appurtenances, liberties, and easements to the said land belonging, in free, pure, and perpetual alms, and with common of pasture and easements to the town of Oldum and Wernith, and with haulm (*holua* : straw or stubble) for pasturing his cattle, and with acquittance of pannage for his swine and for his men coming over that land,—

“ To have and to hold of God and of the Church of the Blessed Mary of Prestewiche and of the Rectors of said church freely and quietly, entirely and peaceably,—paying out of it yearly to God and to the Church of the Blessed Mary of Prestewiche, three silver pence at (the feast of) the Assumption of the Blessed Mary the Virgin (15th August), for every secular (or civil) service and impost.

“ And I, the said Hamo, son of Richard, and my heirs, will truly warrant to God and the Church of the Blessed Mary of Prestewiche and the Rectors of the same Church, the said service as well as the pence, saving the inheritance of the said John, son of Geoffrey, and his heirs, against all men for ever.

“ In testimony whereof I have set my seal to this present writing, these being the witnesses :—

“ RALPH DE WELHUM, then dean of Mamcester,
THOMAS DE HETON, GEOFFREY DE CHADIRTON,
GEOFFREY, his son, ADAM DE OLDUM, ADAM DIL
IMPETRES, WILLIAM SCHEREWIND, WILLIAM, his
son, the chaplain ; and others.”

From an early period disputes appear to have arisen as to the degree of subordination which the chapelry owed to the Mother Church of Prestwich, and among the deeds preserved at Prestwich is a Latin parchment containing fifteen lines, and measuring about 1oin. by

5in., which records a visitation of William de Neuagh, Archdeacon of Chester, who issued a precept on September 30th, 1406, to the Chapelry of Oldham that they were, as in former times, under obligation to contribute their share of the blessed bread, wine and candles for the high altar.

“To all and singular to whom these present letters shall be inspected, WILLIAM DE NEUHAGH, Archdeacon of Chester, in the Church of Lichfield, sends greeting in the author (*autore*) of our salvation) :—

“Let all of you know that whereas before us at divers times, visiting our Archdeaconry, by reason of a dispute of the parishioners of the parish church of Prestwich, it was established by an agreement that the inhabitants and the residents in the chapelry of Oldom, depending upon the said parish church of Prestewych, are bound to contribute to the finding and providing of the blessed bread on Sundays, and of the bread, wine, and candles to be distributed about the high altar in the said church of Prestewych, and refuse to contribute to other assessments necessary to the said church as the rest of the parishioners of the same, according to custom used from of old. At length as well those parishioners of the church of Prestwich as the inhabitants and residents in the said chapelry submitted concerning and upon all and singular the premises, viz., by our decree and sentence from the highest to the lowest.

“We therefore upon the agreement premised, and satisfied in the same as from the suggestion of the said parishioners as from the answer of the said inhabitants and worshippers, receiving fuller information, because we find that the said chapel of Oldom notoriously depending upon the said parish church of Prestwich, that the inhabitants and worshippers in the said chapelry have contributed to the said objects based on the said agreement from old times, and that they should submit to the burden with the other parishioners of the said parish church as often, and that the charge should be in proportion,—We decree and pronounce that the said

inhabitants and residents in the chapelry of Oldom are to be bound to the said assessments with the parishioners of the said parish church as often as the charge should be levied and to be compulsory at all future times for ever.

“In testimony of all and singular the premises we have caused our letters patent to be drawn up.—Dated at Manchester, 30th September, A.D 1406.”

But about 40 years after the same contention arose, and a second injunction was issued on February 13th, 1446, by the then Archdeacon of Chester (John Burdet), addressed to the Chaplain of Prestwich and the chaplain celebrating divine offices in the Chapelry of Oldom, requiring implicit obedience to the former directions of William de Neuagh in 1406, and threatening the chapelry in the event of contumacy with suspension of the ministrations in the chapel, and at the same time inhibiting the chaplains of the neighbouring churches of Middleton, Rochdale, and Ashton-under-Lyne from administering the Sacrament to the people of the Oldham Chapelry so long as they remain obstinate.

“THE OFFICIAL of the Lord Archdeacon of Chester to our beloved in Christ, the Chaplain of the Parish Church of Prestwich, and also to the Chaplain celebrating divine offices in the chapelry of Oldom, well-known to be depending upon the said Church, greeting in the Lord.

“We have inspected the letters of the venerable father and superior in Christ the Lord WILLIAM [HIGHWORTH], by the grace of God, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, confirming the substance of the laudable decree and final decision of Master WILLIAM NIEUHAGH of blessed memory, of and concerning certain questions lately arisen between the parishioners of Prestwich on the one part and the dwellers and the inhabitants of the town of

Oldom, Chaderton, Ryton, and *Crompton*, upon the right of contributing towards the blessed bread, wine, *bread*, lights, and ornaments, used in the Church of Prestwich, being things in themselves serving to proper reverence, which letters we do not here insert on account of their prolixity.

“Wherefore by (this) authority and ours we commit to you and command by virtue of obedience and under the pain of suspension from celebrating divine offices, that you admonish the parishioners, dwellers, and inhabitants of the aforesaid town of Oldom, Chaderton, Riton, and *Crompton*, firmly enjoining the order upon the days and fasts next after this inspection and decree, effectually persuading one and all to contribute with their fellow parishioners of the said Church of Prestwich, proportionably to the premises, not only for the past year, but also for the future, under pain of suspension from celebrating divine offices in the Chapelry of Oldom; and if after 15 days’ warning elapse, of which five shall be the first, five the second, and the remaining five the third and last warning, we assign the canonical monition itself to you, and wish it to be assigned by you and given out in the said chapel; and if they are still obstinate, you are to fulminate the deprivation of divine offices herein contained, due to their delay, fault, or evasion, if they have not obeyed your previous monitions.

“To you, also, the Chaplain of Oldom, as well as the Chaplains celebrating divine offices in the Parish Churches of Oldom, Mydelton, Rachedale, and Assheton, by virtue of your obedience and under the penalty aforesaid, we from this hour by all means strictly prohibit from rashly administering or celebrating any sacrament or sacramentals to the dwellers and inhabitants of the aforesaid villages with the said hamlets, in their presence after you receive notice of this our order, until they have rendered due obedience to the letters and monitions of the said venerable father, or while they remain obstinate in their refusal.

“Given, at Chester, under the seal of our office, on the 13th day of the month of February, in the year of our Lord 1446.”

After a similar period had elapsed, viz., 42 years, the old contention arose again, and the former order was renewed by a decree which increased the penalty of suspension to forty days in the event of obstinacy.

This was issued on the 20th of June, 1488, by Christopher Talbot, archdeacon in the reign of Henry VII.

“Settlement of 4s. 4d. yearly, rent out of Messuage and close called “Pyghill,” near Horsedge Moor in Oldham, payable to the Clerk of the Church of Prestwich in lieu of the ‘holy bread’ silver due from the inhabitants of Oldham for ever.”

This extract from an old document records that the obligation was in force in the year of 1517.

But about 34 years before this, viz., in the year 1454, Ralph Langley, the then Rector of Prestwich, asserted his authority over the whole chapelry by leasing to Sir Henry Pendlebury, Chantry Priest of Middleton, the tythes, oblations, and emoliments longyng’ to the Capell of Old’m, with in the p’och of P’stwicke, for the term of three years at the annual rent of £28 13s. 4d.

“THIS ENDENTUR’ made bytwene RAUF LONGLEY, p’son of the kyrke of P’stwich, on yt one p’tie, and Sir HENR’ OF PEN’ULBURY p’ste, of the cantarie of Middleton, on that oth’r p’tie, beris wittenes that the said Rauf hase sette & leten to ferme to the said Sir Henr’ all man’ (manner of) tythes, oblations, & e’molim’ts longyng’ to the Capell of Old’m’ with in the p’och of P’stwicke, to the term of iij. yer’ next suying the date of this endentur’, except the glebe londs and the free rentes, for the quich’ tythes, oblations, & emolimentes the said Sir Henr’, RIC’ OF BARTON the elder, & AD’M TETTELOWE, shall be bownden in seu’all obligations to pay to the sayd Rauf or to hijs assignes for ev’i yer’ duryng’ the iij. yer’ xliij. marke, in forme and man’ that folowes,—that is to wete, at the fest of the Assumpcion of our’ lade Saynt Mare

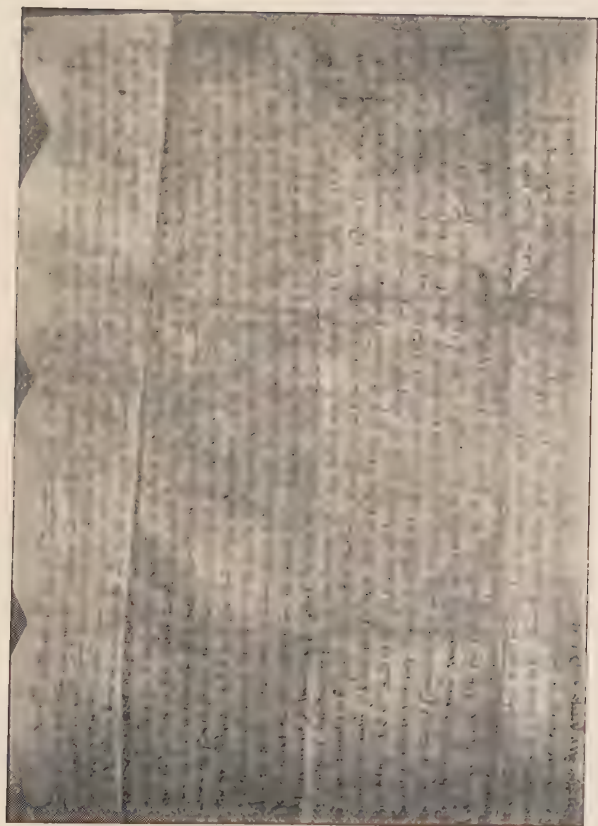
(15th August) next suyng the dat' of this endentur' xii. marke, and at the fest of Saynt Martine in wynt' (11th November) then next suyng xii. marke, and at the fest of the pur' of our' lade Saynt Mare (2nd February) then next suyng xix. mark; & so yeldyng' ev'i yer at the said festes vn to the tyme that ye summe of vi. score marke and ix. be fully payet, as in the said obligations more playnle appereth. And also the sayd Rauf g'ua'tes (grants) by thes endentures yt schall fynd a p'och prest at the said capell and pay all man' dymes, p't...es, subsidies, & synages, the quich fall within the sayd terme of iij. yer', and all other scharges within the said capell longyng' of dewte the said Rauf to fynd, the sayd Sir Hen' schall fynd in like form as hase ben don afore tyme. Providet alway that if hit happen the said Rauf, or elles the sid Ric' Barton the elder, deegh' with in the sayd iij. yer', then the sayd terme of iij. yer' cease & be determinet, & the sayd Henr', Ric', & Ad'm or thayr assignes schall pay to the sayd Rauf or to his assignes for as mykell as they have resayuet of tythes, oblacions, & emolimentes of that yer' by the discrecion of mene frendes. And also the sayd Rauf will by this endentur' that the said Sir Henr', Ric', and Ad'm be not bownden by virtwe of any obligacion made to the said Rauf to pay to the sayd Raufe aftyr the deth of othir of the said Rauf or Ric' except for as muche as yay have resayvet by fore the deth of othir of the said Rauf or Ric'. Providet also that the said Sir Henr' schall' not resayve in ye last yer' no tithe of corne the quich is tendable by fore the fest of Saynt Bartholomewe ye Ap'll (24th August). In wittenes of ye quich thying to aythir p'tie of thes endenture the p'ties afore said have set theyre seals.

“Giffen at the Dene in the fest of Saynt Bartholomew the Ap'll ye yer' of Kynge Henr' the Sext aftir the conquest the xxxij. (1454).”

But it will now be observed that the rights of the Rector of Prestwich are regarded as synonymous with the responsibilities of the Rector for the same Ralph Langley, who farms out the tithes of the chapelry in

1454, also some 22 years afterwards, viz., 1476, undertakes at his own cost to rebuild or enlarge the church at Oldham.

“This endentur’ made the iiij^{te} day of Novembr, the yere of oure Lord A. Ml cccclxxvi. betwene RAUFF LONGLEY p’son of | Prestwich opon that one p’tie, and WILLIAM HAMOND, RAUFF HAMOND, & MILES ALENSON, masons, opon that o’yr p’tie.—The p’ties aforesaid | ben agreed in man’ & forme that folowes, That is to say, the said William, Rauff, & Miles, masons, have taken opon yaim to make at Oldom | A body of A Chirche in man’ & forme that folowes: That is to say, yai shall bynde & make sufficiently iiij arches opon aither side the | Kyrke wt hewen stone of mason werke, ev’y arche of xii. fote betwene the pillers, and of heght undir the arche xvij. fote, and of | widdnesse betwene the pillers ou’thwerte xx. fote and at aither end a crosarche ou’thwerte, that one according to the pillers, | that oy’r according for a Stepull wt ij. boterassez att the west end. Also on aither side one yling of x. fote wyde from the pillers, | and the wall of xii. fote heght. In the yling on the south-side v. wyndowes, that is to say, opon aither end one, And opon the | side iiij., and iiij. boterassez, upon aither cornell one, and one betwene the wyndowes, wt a dur’ and a porche y’to; And in the yling | opon the North side iiij. windowes, in aither end one; And ij. on the side with iiij. boterassez at aither cornell, one & betwene | the wyndowes, and a dur y’to. And as for the wyndowes iiij. of yaim, ev’y wyndow of iiij. lightes and the residew of | ij. lightes sufficient & according to the werke. All durres, wyndowes, boterassez, pillers, & gabull tables, grounde tables, | and the arche in the porche, of huven stone; And to make all the residew sufficiently wt wallyng stone, and aft’ the grounde | werke baret the said masons to laye the stone and to take the grounde werke; And if it happen that ye’ falle any traves or | disagreement betwene the said p’ties so that the werke be not sufficiently made, then the said p’ties to be redressed by | oy’ masons according to faithe & conscience, for the which werke in this forme to be made, the said Rauff



FACSIMILE OF OLD CONTRACT DEED, 1476.

p'son g'untēs to pay, or make to be paid, to the saides William, Rauff, & Miles, in or to yaire assignes xxvij^{li} vi^s viij^{et} of leall | money in man' & forme that folowes,—That is to say at the ffest of Saynt Nicholas (6th December) next suyng the date of this | endenture a Cs And at the Nativite of Saynt John the Baptist then next suyng (24th June) Cs, and so at the ffest of Saint Nicholas yen next suyng Cs, and at the Nativite of Saynt John the Baptiste then next suyng Cs, and at | ffest of Saynt Nicholas then next suyng Cs and the remanent of xxvij^{li} vj^s. viij^d. to be paid when yai | have fynnysshed yair werke; And this werke be fynnysshed & endet by Estur day (11th April) that shall be in the yer of o^r Lord A mcccc^{lxxix}.—Also the said Rauff p'son shall fynde to the saidez William, Rauff, & Miles, masons, aforesaid, | stone, lyme, sonde, water, sayntrees, scaffaldes, & verne, and bringe yaim to the ground: upon his coste; and | all oy'r stuffe longyng to the masons and to yair crafte, the said masons to fynde upon yair owne coste, and to all thes | coven'ntes well & truly to be p'formed upon aither p'tie the p'ties aforesaid byndes yaim by thes endentures.

“In wittenesse | of the which thing to aither p'tie of thes endentures the p'ties aforesaid ent'chaungeably have sette yair sealles.

“Yeven the day & the yere aforesaid.”

More than a century passes and then the old dispute arises again as to the obligation of the Oldham Chapelry to contribute to the supply for holy bread, wine, and candles for the high altar at Prestwich. This time it occurs in the unhappy reign of Queen Mary, and is complicated by the fact of the wardens of Prestwich, as well as the wardens and people of the chapelry proving contumacious.

Stirring events have transpired during the 100 years which have intervened. The work of the Reformation has begun, and some of the results of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. visitations of the parish seem to be

suggested in the documents which record this dispute as "Reparation of the Fabrics of both churches as well as ornaments and other necessities" are mentioned as falling upon the obligations of the parishoners.

This injunction is issued by Cuthbert, Bishop of Chester, and refers to the previous decisions of 1406, 1446, and 1488, and is to be enforced under pain of suspension and interdiction.

"To all the faithful in Christ to whom the present writing shall come, or whom the within written has concerned or can concern in whatever way for the future, CUTHBERT, by divine permission, BISHOP OF CHESTER, sends greeting in the Lord everlasting, and that there may be undoubted faith with all present.

"Know ye that whereas strife, disagreement, contention, and controversy have arisen between the now Rector of the Parish Church of Prestwiche on the one part, and the Wardens and parishioners of the said church of Prestwiche, as well as the wardens and inhabitants within the bounds or circuit of the Chapel of Oldom, annexed to the same Parish Church of Prestwiche, in the said our diocese of Chester, on the other part, of and concerning payment for the finding and the provision of the blessed bread to be distributed to the parishioners on various days, and of the bread, wine, and candles around the high altar of the Parish Church of Prestwiche, as well as of other necessities now appertaining and belonging to the said Parish Church of Prestwiche,—

"Now, we (as we are bound by our pastoral office), desiring to deal justly with the said parties, assembled before us for judgment within the Parish Church of Prestwich.....confirm the former decrees and order that the Wardens and the other parishioners of Prestwiche, and the residents or inhabitants of Oldom, should contribute their share towards the reparation of the Parish Church of Prestwiche as regards the nave and the bell-tower of the same, as well as the ornaments and

other necessities belonging to the said Parish Church of Prestwiche as often as is necessary, and also that the residents and inhabitants of the said Chapel of Oldom shall undertake the reparation of the said Chapel of Oldom, as well as any other burdens incumbent upon them by the help of the Wardens and parishioners of Prestwiche. And, moreover, that the parishioners of Prestwiche, as well as the said residents of Oldom should pay their proportions towards the support and sustentation of the lights as well around the Host as around the sepulchre of the Lord in the Parish Church of Prestwiche year by year, both on the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy week, when candles are used and set up in the service called *In Tenebris*, and to offer their waxen candles, on the day of the purification of St. Mary, to the hands of the Rector of the Parish Church of Prestwiche for the time being, or his deputy, as well within the Church of Prestwiche as within the Chapel of Oldom each successive year; and that the parishioners of Prestwiche, as often as the work was necessary, should support and repair the precinct of the church-yard of Prestwiche, leaving the grass and fodder within the said yard to the use and profit of the Rector for the time being, as is right. And these regulations we order and enjoin under pain of interdiction. In testimony of which we affix the seal of the Bishopric of which we discharge the office.

“Dated the 20th day of the month of April in the year 1558.”

These particular obligations appear to have been sustained until at least 1636, when, by the testimony of a parchment roll, a church rate was levied over the whole parish, including the chapelry, “for bread, wyne, and other necessities for the Ch. of P’stwich.” This parchment is upwards of five yards in length, and contains 564 names of persons resident within the parish chargeable with the rate and the quota of each person.

Twenty years afterwards, in 1656, the churchwardens, who then began to publish their accounts, made no mention of the contribution for the Chapelry of Oldham, and so it may be safely assumed the obligation had by this period ceased.

In a return made for the primary visitation of the then Bishop of Chester, dated June 8th, 1778, more than a hundred years afterwards, the Rector of Prestwich includes the Ancient Parochial Church of Oldham as within his parish and jurisdiction, and describes it as a "very old edifice," and also mentions among his distinguished parishioners the names of Sir Watts Horton, Bart., of Chadderton; Robert Radcliffe, Esq., of Foxdenton; Joseph Pickford, Esq., of Royton.

In speaking of the church he says:—"The Ancient Parochial Church of Oldham, of which I am rector, is about eight miles distant from Prestwich Church, has been augmented by two lots from Queen Anne's Bounty, which is laid out in the purchase of lands, the rents of which amount to £22 a year; is regularly served every Sunday, and two sermons preached, and prayers read on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year; and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered the second Sunday in every month by the Rev. Thos. Fawcett, duly qualified and licensed by Dr. Keen, late Lord Bishop of Chester, nominated by the Rev. Levett Harris, Rector of Prestwich; and the younger part of the congregation catechised every Wednesday and Friday between Easter and Whitsuntide."

All the foregoing circumstances reveal how the early history of the ancient chapelry is interwoven with that of the ancient church of Prestwich, whilst its intimate

connection is still maintained through the patronage of the ancient chapelry, and the older parishes formed out of it being still retained in the hands of the Rector of Prestwich-cum-Oldham.

THE RELATION OF THE TOWNSHIPS TO THE CHAPELRY.

As the parochial chapelry increased in population and importance it was a perfectly obvious development that the ancient chapel should acquire an increasing power of jurisdiction within its own borders, and become the centre for ecclesiastical unity to the townships of Crompton, Royton, and Chadderton, which the parochial chapelry embraced; but as the Mother Church of Prestwich always exercised her controlling power over the whole chapelry, the relation of the ancient chapel to the townships was always rather that of senior among equals than of parent among children, and wherever a new church and district was formed the exact relation to both the Mother Church of Prestwich and the Ancient Chapel were carefully and distinctly defined in the deed of consecration.

SHAW CHAPEL.

The township of Crompton was the first to possess its own chapel and to exercise a certain degree of jurisdiction within its own area. The ancient Shaw chapel dates back to 1515, and, there is little doubt, was served in the middle ages, like the parochial chapelry, by the priests of Prestwich, who were sometimes resident and sometimes non-resident.

Until it was formed into a separate ecclesiastical

parish, in the middle of the last century, its warden was yearly elected with those of Royton and Chadderton at the annual vestry of the ancient chapelry, and, together with the two other townships, contributed its portion to the pulling down of the ancient chapel and the erection of the present Church of S. Mary, 1829.

ROYTON CHAPEL.

The Chapel of S. Paul, in the township of Royton, was the second to be formed out of the parochial chapelry. It was erected in 1757, and was intended to serve the convenience of the inhabitants of the townships of Royton and Chadderton, with the hamlet of Thornham.

1757.—July 1.—St. Paul's Church, Royton, Consecrated. Following is an extract from the Consecration Deed :—

“In the Name of God. Amen. Whereas for the ease and convenience of the Inhabitants of Royton, in the Parochial Chapelry of Oldham, within the Parish of Prestwich, County of Lancaster, and our Diocese of Chester, being two miles distant or thereabouts from their said Parish Church, and other neighbouring Inhabitants of the Township of Chadderton within the said Chapelry of Oldham and of the Hamlet of Thornham, in the Parish of Middleton, in the same County and Diocese, who by reason of the distance of their several Habitations from their several Chapels or Parish Churches, and also for want of room in the Parish Churches or Chapel of Oldham and Middleton aforesaid, cannot (especially in the Winter time), without great inconvenience, repair to the same to hear Divine Service. And we DECREE and DECLARE the same to have been and to be so separated, dedicated, and consecrated, YET WITHOUT any PREJUDICE to either of the Mother Churches of Middleton and Prestwich or the Parochial Chapel of Oldham aforesaid, And the

respective rights and interests of each of them in all Priviledges, Profits, Tythes, Oblations, Obventions, fees, Dues, Wages, and Ecclesiastical Emoluments whatsoever to the Rectors, Vicars, Curates, and other Ministers thereof and of every of them for the Time being respectively by Law or Custom in any wise of right belonging AS WELL as the right of the Rector of Prestwich to nominate a Curate to be admitted and licensed according to Law to officiate in this Chapel when and as often as the same shall become vacant. AND provided also that the Curate of the same Chapel for the time being shall keep a Register of Christnings and Weddings had and Solemnized herein, and of all Burials in the Chapel Yard, and once in every quarter of the year transmit to the Curate or Minister of Oldham aforesaid for the time being the names and places of abode of all such persons as shall be here Christened, Married, and Buried, and the certain days of the week and month in which such Christning, Marriage, and Burial shall be performed, in order for them to be Registred in the common Register of the said Parochial Chapel, and shall receive and pay to the said Curate or Minister of the Parochial Chapel of Oldham aforesaid and the Chapel Clerk there all such Customary and due fees for the several Offices here performed of Marriage, Churching, and Burial of any of the said Parishioners in like manner and as fully as they would be due and payable to them or any of them if such Office was performed in the said Parochial Chapel of Oldham."

HOLLINWOOD CHAPEL.

S. Margaret's, Hollinwood, was the third chapel or district to be taken out of the ancient chapelry, and the preparations for erection appears to have begun in 1765, but the chapel was not consecrated until 1769, and appears to have only cost the modest sum of £500, and in defining the relationship to the ancient Parochial Chapel, the curate in charge of S. Margaret's is to be under the obligation. when requested, to assist at the

administration of the Sacrament at S. Mary's on Christmas Day and Easter Day in token of his subjection to the ancient chapel and to the Mother Church of Prestwich.

“ Trustees for the Erecting, Building, Furnishing, and Completing the said intended Chapel :—

Robert Radcliffe, Esq., Foxdenton.

Edward Gregge, Esq., Chamber Hall.

John Kershaw, Gentleman, Hollins.

Edmund Whitehead, Gentleman, Hollinwood.

George Worthington, the elder, Gentleman, Oldham.

George Worthington, the younger, Gentleman, Wer-
neth.

Abraham Wild, James Taylor, and Benjamin Taylor,
all of Hollinwood, Yeomen.

Jonathan Buckley, Yeoman, Oldham.

“ The deed sets forth that ‘ each of the chief or principal subscribers whose names are on the deed are allowed to choose and set out for themselves one handsome and suitable family pew or seat in some agreeable part of the said intended chapel so as not to exceed in value according to the rate hereinafter mentioned the sum of——.’ Further, it reads :—‘ For every guinea subscribed they are entitled to one sitting for one person.’ They were further bound, for the deed proceeds ‘ that each and every of them shall and will yearly and every year, from time to time until the finishing and completing of the said chapel, till such time as the Queen Anne's Bounty for the augmentation & maintenance of the living will well and truly pay ; or cause to be paid unto the minister nominated to officiate at the said chapel, the sum of eighteen pence for every one seat in the said chapel, which all and each of the subscribers hereto entitled to and have.’ Further, ‘ that they shall yearly and every year after the said bounty shall be raised, pay or cause to be paid by and amongst them such sums of money as may be expended in repairs of the chapel according to the number of seats they hold. And also the sum of twelve pence sterling for every seat in the chapel to be paid to the minister for the time being.’ ”

“1769.—July 8.—Hollinwood Church Consecrated.

Extracts from the Consecration Deed :—

“In the name of GOD, Amen. Whereas for the Ease and Convenience of the Inhabitants of the Chapelry of Oldham, within the Parish of Prestwich, County of Lancaster, and Diocese of Chester, many of whom, for want of Room in the antient Chapel there, are destitute of seats or sitting places therein, And that the Curate of this Chapel for the time being shall keep a Register of all Christenings and Weddings had and solemnized herein and of all Burials in the Chapel Yard, and once in every quarter of the year transmit unto the Curate of the said antient Chapel of Oldham the names and places of abode of all persons so christened, married, and buried, and the certain days of the Week and Month on which such Christenings, Marriages, or Burials shall be performed, in order for them to be registered as usual in the Register of such antient Chapel. AND that there shall be paid to the Curate of this Chapel and his successors for the time being for the performance of his Ministerial office there double the ffees which are usually and of Right ought to be paid for every Christening, Churching, Wedding, and Burial at the said antient Chapel. AND that the said Curate of this Chapel and his successors shall from time to time collect and receive such double ffees and account for and pay one Moiety or half part thereof by equal half-yearly payments on the Twenty-fourth day of June and Twenty-fifth day of December unto the rector of Prestwich aforesaid, to be by him divided and distributed between himself and the Clerk and Sexton of the Chapel of Oldham in like manner as the ffees at the said antient Chapel are divided. AND that the remaining Moiety of the same ffees shall be divided and distributed amongst the Curate, Clerk, and Sexton of this Chapel in the same proportion and manner as is customary to the Curate, Clerk, and Sexton of the said antient Chapel. PROVIDED likewise that the Curate of this Chapel for the time being shall, if thereunto requested, assist at the administration of the Sacraments at the antient parochial Chapel of Oldham aforesaid upon

every Christmas Day and Easter Day in token of his Subjection to the said antient Chapel and to the Mother Church of Prestwich.—EDW. CHESTER."

S. PETER'S CHAPEL.

This chapel appears to have been in course of erection about the same time as that of the chapel at Hollinwood, and to have been consecrated about a year before S. Margaret's, of Hollinwood—viz., June 2, 1768.

Extracts from the Consecration Deed :—

"In the Name of God, Amen. Whereas for the Ease and Convenience of the Chapelry of Oldham, within the Parish of Prestwich, County of Lancaster, and Diocese of Chester, many of whom for want of room in the ancient Chapel there are destitute of seats or Sitting places therein. AND we do CONSECRATE this Chapel for and as a CHAPEL of EASE under the Mother Church of Prestwich and the ancient Chapel of Oldham aforesaid to the honor of God and the sacred uses aforesaid by the name of the CHAPEL OF SAINT PETER IN OLDHAM, and declare that the same shall from hencetorth be so called and denominated. And that the Curate of this Chapel for the time being shall keep a register of all Christenings and Weddings had and solemnized herein and of all Burials in the Chapel yard, and once in every quarter of the year transmit to the Curate of the said ancient Chapel of Oldham the names & places of abode of all persons Christened, Married and Buried, and the certain days of the week & month on which such Christenings, Marriages, or Burials shall be performed, in order for them to be registered as usual in the register of such ancient Chapel, and that there shall be paid to the Curate of this Chapel and his successors for the time being for the performance of his ministerial office there double the fees which are usually and of right ought to be paid for every Christening, Churching, Wedding, and Burial at the said ancient Chapel, and that the said Curate of this Chapel and his successors shall from time to time collect & receive such double fees and account for and pay one moiety or half

part thereof by equal half-yearly payments on the 24th day of June and 25th day of December unto the Curate of the said ancient Chapel to be by him divided and distributed between himself and the Clerk & Sexton there in like manner as the fees at the said ancient Chapel are divided and distributed, and that the remaining moiety of the same fees shall be divided and distributed amongst the Curate, Clerk, and Sexton of this Chapel in the same proportions and of the Sacraments at the ancient parochial Chapel of Oldham aforesaid upon every Easter day & Whitsun day in token of his subjection to the said ancient Chapel and to the Mother Church of Prestwich.

“THIS SENTENCE was openly and publicly read and promulgated, and all and singular the premises were acted, had and done by the above named Bishop immediately after the repetition of the Nicene Creed in time of divine Morning Service within the Chapel aforesaid upon Thursday, the second day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight, in the presence of us—EDWD. CHESTER.”

For three hundred and fifty years the ancient parochial chapel (with the aid of the Shaw chapel for 250 years) had practically sufficed for the ecclesiastical needs of the whole chapelry, when suddenly, in the middle of the 18th century the rapid development of modern industries had so increased the population in the neighbourhood that it became necessary to provide three new chapels within the short space of ten years, and before another hundred and twenty years had passed away, 18 more churches, with their populous parishes, had been formed out of the ancient parochial chapelry.

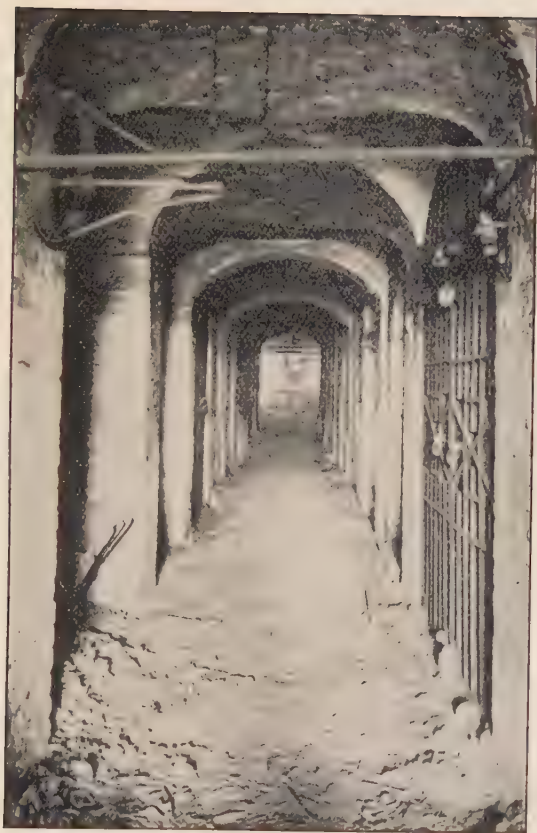
II.

THE FABRIC AND THE DEDICATION.

Alas! so effectual was the demolition of the Ancient Chapel which preceded the present Parish Church that few traces even of the stones remain, and only by descending into the vaults of the present building can we look upon any part *in situ* of that once ancient and most interesting fabric—but we are grateful that even these remain to testify so effectually to the very substantial work of our ancestors, for they still carry a large part of the tower and the west end of the present building.

Whether any of those ancient foundations ever supported any part of the smaller chapel, which is supposed to have stood upon the Manor of Hamo de Oldham at the end of the 13th century, c. 1280, and whether the earlier fabric had its altar for Divine worship and sacrifice as far back as Norman or Saxon times must remain, in the absence of further evidence, a matter of tradition rather than proof, of conjecture rather than certainty.

But it is hardly a matter for doubt that an early English Gothic Church of rugged but substantial character was standing in the 15th century, and perhaps going back to the 13th century, and we base our conclusions on the fairly numerous drawings of the exterior, both north and south, which have survived, and Mr. J. Butterworth's description of both the interior and exterior of the old chapelry, whilst this is further



THE CRYPT, SHOWING OLD FOUNDATIONS, 1906.



OLD STONE COFFIN, C. 1300.

sustained by the fact that when Sir Ralph Langley undertook his restoration and probable enlargement in 1476, he kept to the same period of Gothic style, for although, as Mr. Butterworth says, "The body of the Church bears the appearance of a more ancient date than the time of Edward the IV.," yet there remains a very general consistency of early English Gothic pervading the whole structure, and we are further helped to our conclusion by the stone coffin discovered when the old chapelry was taken down, as this probably dates about the 13th century or the early part of the 14th century, and the old Font perhaps a century later, both of which periods are covered by the early English Gothic.

The chief alteration, so far as we know, was the restoration or enlargement effected in 1476 by Sir Ralph Langley, the then Rector of Prestwich already referred to, and of this we possess most interesting particulars fortunately preserved in an ancient deed written in old English, and expressed in quaint words and terms, and we are glad to be able to publish a *facsimile* of the deed.

There is a particularly interesting clause in the contract showing how disagreements and disputes were settled in those days.

In case of disagreement either party to the contract had the opportunity of calling in other masons, and they were quite agreeable that those other masons should give an honest verdict according to faith and conscience.

The work was to be finished in about two years and a half, and the amount to be paid £28 6s. 8d., in instalments of 100 shillings every six months, and the balance at completion.

The total cost shows the great difference between the value of money then and now.

About ten years afterwards, viz., 1486, the same Rector (Ralph Langley) appears to have been instrumental in adding three new bells to the Church. Until then there had been but one bell, and these four bells are included in the inventory made by the order of the King in the sixth year of Edward VI.

By the first half of the next century, 1537, we find by the intention of the will of one Rauf Chetham that both the enlargement and the repair of the Church appear desirable.

The survival of this will is also of considerable importance as making quite clear the ancient Patronal Dedication was that of the B.V.M., and that by this time there was a priest appointed to the particular charge of the chapelry, and described as the Parish Priest of Oldham.

“ 1537.—Sep. 12.—Will of Rauf Chetham, of Crompton or Riton. My body to be buried within the Church of Our Blessed Lady of Oldham, before the ‘ quere ’ door. Towards the repairs of the said Church, 20s. Other bequests to Rochdale, Milnrōw, Ashton-under-lyne, &c. If it will please the gentlemen and other honest men of the parish of Oldham to take upon them the business to enlarge and ‘ make more ’ the Church of Oldham, or to cover the ‘ Rowffe ’ of the said Church with lead within 5 years after my decease ; then the Churchwardens shall take from my executors £4 for the same. . . . I give towards the upholding of Our Lady’s service at Oldham 2 ‘ Stokks,’ i.e., 16s. To John Chetham, son of Laurence, my son, 4 marks in ‘ penny and pennyworth ’ to pray for my soul. To Thomas Chatterton, son of Thomas, one ‘ Twynter Quye ’ (cow) to be kept by John Tettlawe, his father-in-law, until the said Thomas

shall begin to keep house himself. . . . The rest of my goods to be disposed of for the health of my soul by the advice of Sir William Langeley, parson of Prestwiche, and Sir Thomas Shorroke, curate of Oldham. I make my Master, Sir John Byron, Knt., Robert Langley, esq., Sir William Langley, Clerk, and my sons Adam and Robert, executors, and my cousin, Arthur Belfield, and Rauffe Cudworth supervisors. Witnesses, Sir Richard Assheton, Knt., Robert Holte, of Stubley, esq., and Sir Thos. Shorrokes, Curate at Oldham."

THE PRIVATE CHAPELS.

Mr. Butterworth, when describing the Church as it appeared in his time, 1817, says: "The north wall has manifestly been built at three separate and distinct periods of time, as may be clearly seen by examining its exterior face, the portion from the tower to the fourth buttress being the most ancient, and containing the original windows; each window on the north side being composed of two pointed arches and on the south side of three, each compartment of an equal height, divided by simple mullions and terminating in trefoil heads. From the fourth buttress to the fifth and from the fifth to the sixth (in which are situate the Cudworth and Horton's chapels) are successive enlargements. . . .

"Other marks of a successive enlargement are visible in the interior of the Church, which is a plain, simple, unadorned specimen of the early Gothic style, consisting of a body and two side wings or aisles." He thus appears to suggest that these chapels in some degree altered the general character of the building at the time of their erection, but whether they really were chapels built into the fabric or merely chapels formed by screens, altars, and ecclesiastical appointments within the original

fabric (as was often the case) is not quite clear, in any case these chapels attached to the few distinguished families of the neighbourhood are of considerable importance, and supply us with some of the most interesting history of the Church.

There appear to have been two chapels only, the one in the north aisle being the Cudworth Chapel, and associated with the family resident at Werneth Hall, and one in the south aisle, which appears to have been successively associated with the families of the Radcliffes, Asshetons, and the Hortons. This is confirmed by the indenture of Church goods made for the King in the 6th year of Edward the VI., in which three altars, furnished with altar cloths, are noted. These would correspond to the High Altar in the chancel and the north and south altars in the aisles. It is confirmed also by a drawing of Sir Charles Barry, who was asked to prepare plans for the new church in 1829, and in which plan he proposed to embrace and preserve the old choir with its chapels.

THE NORTH CHAPEL.

This chapel was known as the Cudworth Chapel, and in a will of one Ralph Cudworth, of Werneth, dated Aug. 21st, 1572, the following request is made:—

“Will of Ralph Cudworth of Werneth. My mortall bodey to chrystyn buryall wythin the chapell on the north side of ye p'ryshe church. All my goods to be divided into three parts, one part for myself, one part for my wife, and the third part for my children. To Ralph Cudworth, my bastard son, £30 a year during his life, out of a tenement now in the tenure of John Goddard, with power of distraint. To Ralph Cudworth, son of Ralph Cudworth, my bastard son, 40s. To my son John



SIR CHARLES BARRY'S DRAWING, SHOWING N. CHAPEL
OF OLD CHURCH, 1829.

Cudworth certain heirlooms. . . . Mentions daughters Anne, Margere, and Alice Cudworth. . . . Wife Jane to have the governance of the daughters during her widowhood. . . . William Assheton my brother-in-law and John Taylor of Horshedge, executors. Witnesses, Arthur Ashton of Rochdale, gent., and Sir Rodger Wrigley, clerke."

In the same chapel was an interesting monument in black and white marble, surmounted by the arms of Cudworth, empaling Moseley, with the following Latin inscription, recorded by Mr. Butterworth in his history of 1817 :—

1652—June 7.—John Cudworth died.

Siste viator moræ erit pretium,

Responsa accipe aliquot questionculis.

QUEST: Quis jacet hic? RESP.: Johannes Cudworth, de Wernith hall.

Q.: Cujas fuit? R.: Lancastriensis maneri de Oldham Dominus.

Q.: Qualis vixit? R.: Probus in homines, in Deum pius.

Q.: Quam duxit conjugem? R.: Aliciam Antonii Moseley filiam.

Q.: Quos suscepit liberos? R.: Joshuam, Johannem, Jonam, Ricardum, Antonium, Thomam, Danielem (infans qui occubuit), Franciscum, Jacobum, et Danielum alterum, et e biliori sexu cum Hanna Janam.

Q.: Quot vixit annos? R.: Octo erat et sexagenarius.

Q.: Quo decessit? R.: Anno Christogomœe secundo et quingentissimo *supra* millesimum et sexcentissimum Junii 7 mo.

Q.: Qui hoc erexerunt? R.: Richardus et Thos.; vitæ et necis civilis arbiter classis, non nimis felicis pettit Jamaicum.

Q.: Satis est viator? R.: Tecum cogita quantillum differt, ambulans a jacente pulvere.

TRANSLATION.

Stop passenger! It will be worth your while hear replies to a few brief inquiries.

Quest.: Who reposes here? Answ.: John Cudworth, of Wernith Hall, Esq.

Q.: Of what country was he? A.: He was of the county of Lancaster, and Lord of the Manor of Oldham.

Q.: How did he live? A.: He was upright towards man, and pious towards God.

Q.: Whom did he marry? A.: Alice, daughter of Anthony Moseley.

Q.: What children had he? A.: Joshua, John, Jonas, Richard, Anthony, Thomas, Daniel (who died in infancy), Francis, James, and a second Daniel; and of the feebler sex, Jane and Hannah.

Q. : How old was he ? A. : He was sixty-eight years of age.

Q. : When did he die ? A. : On the 7th of June, in the year of our Lord, one thousand six hundred and fifty-two.

Q. : Who erected this monument ? A. : Richard and Thomas, who was supreme civil Judge of the unsuccessful fleet which afterwards took Jamaica.

Q. : Passenger, is it enough ? A. : Reflect as you walk over the reposing ashes how little you differ from him.

THE SOUTH CHAPEL.

The Radcliffes of Foxdenton appear to have been the first family associated with this chapel, and the following deposition, made in the year 1564, is interesting as showing the disposition at all times by personal encroachment to dispossess parishioners of their public rights in the Parish Church :—

“ In a deposition made this year by John Radcliffe of Oldham, of the age of 83 years and upwards. Deposed that Edmund Asheton of Chaderton, gent., being a man of much substance and repute in the neighbourhood, did in the begining of the reign of Henry viii, erect and set up one small p'close (chapel) where his forefathers, being of the name of Radclyffe, were accustomed to resort in times of Divine Service, and some of whose lands he inherited. And the ceiling of the same was under the window on the south side of the Chapel nigh a pillar over anenst where Mr. Tetlow of the Chamber sat, and from the pillar eastward he brought his parclose to the next pillar to the chancel. He did also glasse the window, and placed his father's arms there and (the arms) of his own ancestors, and there they do now stand and may be seen. But deponent believeth he had no licence, and that other gentlemen had as much right to claim Chappels for themselves before the windows wherein their names stand as well as Mr. Ashton, but he could not say that Mr. Ashton's ancestors by the name of Radclyffe had no right therein, but the whole parish do suffer detriment and wrong by the too large encroachment on their old rights where they should sit and kneel in time of divine

service. And the said Mr. Ashton dying about twenty years since and his son James dying more than ten years since, the same is now claimed by Edmond Ashton."

However, by this time the Radcliffes of Foxdenton appear to have acquired a right to be buried in the nave and chancel of the Church, as by a will of one Thomas Radclyffe, dated October 2nd, 1567, he desires to be laid near to the place where his wife is buried in the Parish Church of Oldham, and where the particular place is, seems located by the will of a Sir William Radcliffe, executed in the middle of the next century, dated March 17th, 1647."

"Will of SIR WILLIAM RADCLIFFE. — I William Radcliffe, of FFOXDETON, Co. Lancr., Knt., being of good & perfect memory, thanks bee to Almighty God, not knowing when it shall please God to take mee to his mercy, doe constitute, ordaine and appoint this my last will and testament in manner and form as followeth: ffirst I bequeath my soule unto Almighty God willing him of his greate mercy to have Compassion on mee and trustinge through the passion blood & death of Christ to bee one of his Electe Company of heaven with the blessed spirits and saints. Allsoe I will beg my body to be buried in the Chancell of the Parish Church of Ouldham wheire my Lovinge ffriends lye buried."

And this probability seems confirmed by Butterworth, who says: "In the great eastern window is the arms of the Radcliffes of Foxdenton, painted on glass, viz.:—

"1 & 4—Argent, a bend engrailed, sable, for Radcliffe.

"2—Argent, a bend engrailed, sable in chief, a mullet of the 2nd.

"3—Argent, a fess and bend sable."

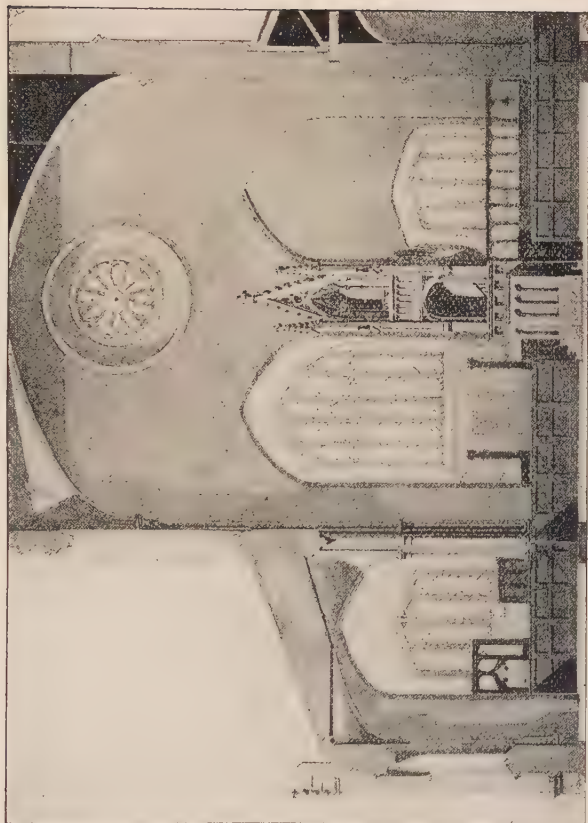
About 50 years after, a certain Edmund Assheton, of Chadderton, perhaps the one referred to in the

deposition of W. Radcliffe, makes provision in his will to be buried "In my chancell within the Church of Oldham," which may mean the south chapel now acquired perhaps by the Asshetons of Chadderton.

"1623—Dec. 16.—Will dated of Edmund Assheton, of Chaderton, esq., he at the time 'being sicke and weake in bodye, but of sound and perfect memorie, praised by the Lord.' I bequeath my soul into the hands of my Redeemer, through whose meritorious death and passion I am assured of my Salvation and my bodie to be buried in my chancell within the Church of Oldham. I give all privye Tythes, Offerings, Mortuaries, and Church Duties, due to me issuing out of the Parish or Chapelry of Ouldham, and belonging to the Chappel or Church of Ouldham, to go for or towards the Chapplene his Wages, to fynd a Preaching Minister att the Parish Church or Chappel of Ouldham. I desire Sir Raphe Assheton, of Whalley, Baronet, my worthy good friend, to see to this my Will truly executed."

The Hortons succeeded the Asshetons at Chadderton Hall, and evidently took possession of the south chapel, as a white marble tablet, still existing (although in a dilapidated condition) testifies.

In this Chapel
lieth inter'd the Body of Jane,
Daughter of Thos. Horton, Esq.
She departed this life Octr. 24th, 1768, aged 52.
Also the body of Anne,
late wife of Josa Horton, Esq.,
who departed this life May 25th, 1764, aged 44.
Also the body of Jane,
Daughter of Richd. Mostyn, of London, Merchant,
who departed this life Novr. 10th, 1768, aged 77.
Near this Chapel
lieth interr'd the body of Anne,
daughter of Thos. Horton, Esq.,
who departed this life,
January 20th, 1781, aged 66.
Mary Horton,
died April the 1st, 1790, aged 79 years.
Sarah Horton,
died Decr. the 5th, 1790, aged 66 years.



SIR CHARLES BARRY'S DRAWING, SHOWING OLD CHOR, WITH
CUDWORTH AND HORTON CHAPELS, 1829.

Butterworth records a tablet to the memory of Joshua Horton, Esq., and Mary, his wife (who only survived him twelve days), and two others to the memory of Mrs. Ann Horton and Thomas Horton, Esq., and a fourth in white marble to the memory of several branches of the Horton family; and suspended from the roof are five escutcheons of several relatives of the Hortons. And among the accounts kept by John Rudd, steward to Sir William Horton, for the year 1763, the following entry occurs: "Pd. Ralph ye Saxton for cleaning the top and bottom of ye chappell."

THE GALLERY.

The only other changes in the fabric we are able to trace are those of the erection of a gallery for singers at the west end of the Church in the early part of the 18th century (1703-4), and the erection of a vestry in 1777.

"GALLERY ERECTED at the WEST end of OLDHAM CHURCH by James Brierley.

"Elias Hall in his MS. says: 'Our parish being prosperous, and the Church small, and there being scarce room for the congregation, James Brierley obtained leave of the Bishop to erect a gallery at the west end of the church, and he being a lover of singing designed the ascending seats for singers, and if I mistake not I have heard him declare that this was a chief motive of the gallery's erection. Now he declared his intention before it was finished, and we on one of our meeting days went up while the work was a-doing to hear how our voices would sound, being so near the roof of the church, and then was that seat wherein I have all along sate designed to be a leader's seat, being most proper, because just in the middle of the highest form. Now when the gallery was finished we first sate there on Nov. 5, 1704, to sing in time of divine service, which yielded so much satisfaction to the congregation, who had never heard us sing

together in so convenient a manner (for we had before ordered our sitting, viz., the lowest form end nearest the congregation for ye bass singers, the middle for the medius, &c., and the highest for the other parts), that some of the parish who loved singing began to encourage the purchasing of them for the use of singing, and we used all industry imaginable in the affair to get what friends we could, desiring the Rev. Mr. Assheton, the present rector of Prestwich-cum-Oldham, to stand our friend to get the price lower, for he asked fifty pounds for them, and though he urged him once and again, he would not of a good while yield to abate much, only promised to give bountifully in the sale thereof.’”

THE VESTRY.

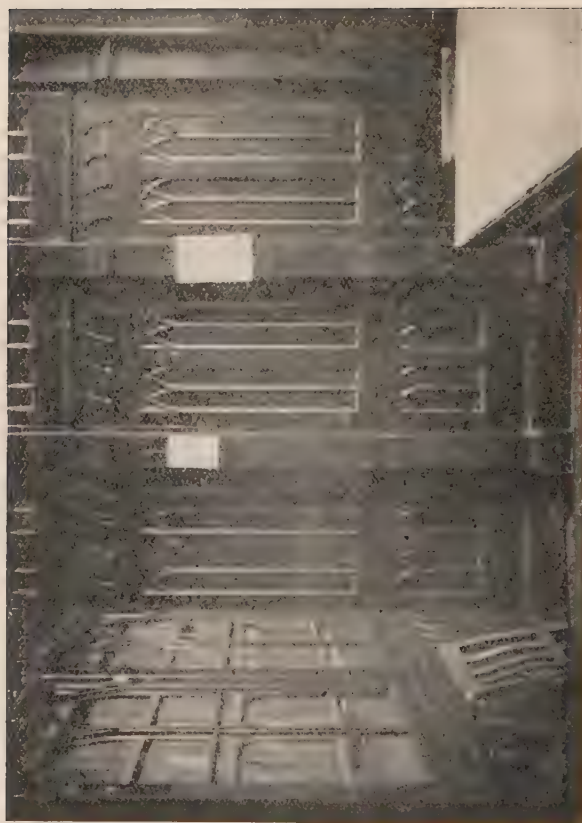
“March.—Meetings called for the ERECTION of a VESTRY AT OLDHAM CHURCH. Notices & letters relating to the same :—

“Oldham, March 9th, 1777.

“Whereas a VESTRY hath been for a LONG TIME WANTED at this Church. And as applycation hath been made for a Vestry to be Erected at the East end of the Chancel. Notice is hereby given that a Vestry meeting will be held in this Church of the land holders and lay payers of this Parish on Wednesday, the 19th day of this Instant March at 2 of the Clock in the afternoon of the said day Immediately at the Toll of the Bell in order to give their Votes for or against a Vestry being Erected at the Proportionable expence of the said Parish.

“15th June, 1777.

“WHEREAS a Vestry Meeting hath been called for the Erection of a Vestry at the East end of the Chancel at this Church in the late Church Wardens time, and consented to. Upon which some Materials was laid upon the ground, and whereas the present Church Wardens of Royton and Crompton oppose it, the Court of Chester advises a fresh Vestry meeting to be called, and a fresh order for it, which order cannot be disobeyed if it be again carried at a Vestry Meeting. NOTICE therefore is hereby given that a Vestry meeting will be held in this Church



THE VESTRY, 1936.

on Friday the twenty seventh day of this Instant June at two of the Clock in the afternoon immediately at the Toll of the Bell (of the Land holders and Lay payers of this Parish) in order to give their Votes for or against a Vestry being Erected at the Proportionable expence of the said Parish. According to the Plan lately laid before the Parishioners.

“Gentlemen,

“The PURPORT of your being called here together, is to determine whether the Vestry meeting lately had and consented to for y^e erection of a Vestry, is to stand good, or not. The free holders and Lay payers are requested to give their voices for or against it.

FURTHERMORE, and as y^e following sums levyed and collected by the late Church Wardens towards the erection of a Vestry at this Church has been paid into y^e hands of the present Church Wardens, namely . . . to James Taylor . . . to Jacob Taylor . . . to John Rowbottom, it is our minds and we vote that y^e said money be applied to y^e building of a Vestry and no other use.

“As witness our hands :

[On the back of the paper is written]

	£	s.	d.
“Oldham	7	3	5
“Royton	4	14	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
“Chadderton	8	12	2 $\frac{1}{2}$

“Mr. Fawcet having shewed me a Plan for a Vestry to be builded at Oldham Church, He has my consent if agreeable to the rest of the Parish.

“EDW. G. HOPWOOD.

“Hopwood. 1777.”

Both these additions must have resulted in considerable disfigurement to the ancient Church. We have no drawing or description of the gallery, but with rare exceptions the erection of a gallery in the west end of a Gothic Church broke up the symmetry of the lines and disfigured that part of the Church.

The period at which these additions were made was particularly unfortunate from an architectural point of view, and the engraving which exists of the old Church, showing the north side with the vestry, reveals what a debasing addition it was to the interesting old fabric.

One of the reasons assigned for building the gallery in 1704 was "the parish being prosperous and the Church small, and there being scarce room for the congregation," but before the century was out the population of Oldham had increased from under 2,000 in 1714 to 9,480 in 1792; and the Parochial Chapelry from 3,615 to 15,776, but by 1831 the population of Oldham had increased to 32,381 and the Parochial Chapelry to 50,513. That is to say, it had more than trebled during the periods mentioned.

This enormous growth of population and prosperity naturally inspired a desire to enlarge the Mother Church, as well as extend the daughter churches; but it was a most unfortunate period for church building, for during the latter part of the Georgian and the early part of the Victorian era a revival of Gothic architecture was aroused, but with few exceptions the buildings erected were of the most debased Gothic, and unfortunately our own Parish Church helped to contribute to the number.

It is the more distressing to us, because the enormous sum of over £30,000 which was ultimately expended on the building would in the last quarter of the century have produced a small cathedral. But almost every mistake that could happen seems to have overtaken the responsible persons at the time. Mr. Barry (afterwards Sir Charles), who designed the present Houses of



THE PRESENT NAVE, QUINCENTENARY, 1906.

Parliament), was invited to produce plans. This he did, and had they been accepted we should have possessed one of the best Gothic buildings to be produced at that period of the early revival, and moreover should have retained the choir and the chapels of the ancient Church, as in his designs he intended to embrace them, and this would have given us the very elements of antiquity and sacred association which the modern town and religion of Oldham so sorely lacks.

His designs, superior as they are for the period, were rejected, and the old Church ruthlessly demolished, so that literally, excepting a part of the foundation, not one stone was left upon another, and the designs of a debased, perpendicular Church, by a Mr. Lane, of Manchester, were chosen. Fortunately the height of the Church gives a certain air of dignity, but its stucco roof and galleries, and mean recess at the east end, which should have displayed a dignified choir to complete the proportion of the building, expose its great defects.

It is often a matter of surprise how such a sum of money could have been expended upon the building, but an examination of the bill of costs reveals how Acts of Parliament and an enormous crypt covering the floor space, with middle and north and south aisles, filled with mortuaries, consumed a considerable part of the cost.

These fortunately in one sense were soon closed, on the other their erection was a great waste of money. We said the time was unfortunate for architectural purposes, but we must add it was a still more unfortunate period so far as the Church's realization of her spiritual mission was concerned.

The Puritan and Calvinistic struggles of the 16th and

17th centuries had been followed by the deadness of the eighteenth century, when the Erastian spirit of such statesmen as Walpole aimed to make the Church a mere creature of the State, and it was this unspiritual and Erastian spirit which pervaded all the earlier part of the 19th century, so that when it came about that Oldham Church was to be rebuilt the then Church officers were also semi-State officials who regarded the laying of a rate upon the whole chapelry as quite a proper way of raising the necessary sum, and thus imposing upon Non-conformists, Roman Catholics, and non-believers obligations in matters with which they had no sympathy.

But having compelled the whole community to contribute to the erection of the Mother Church, ordinary ideas of equity would compel us to suppose that the old rights of the Parochial Chapel (that it should be free to the whole people) at least should be preserved, but, alas, to add blunder to blunder, it was determined to secure the right to sell the proposed pews in the Church to the highest bidders, with both the liberty to sell the pews as a freehold property or to sublet at a rent to the tenant, and to this sad scandal for a time was added a property vote in the county.

Thus the whole pew accommodation of the Church, excepting a few narrow seats beneath the west gallery and some in the galleries, passed into the hands of those able to purchase them, and as a perfectly natural result the system was soon fruitful in most disastrous effects upon the spiritual life of the Church.

The poor were practically excluded, and the Church became for all intents and purposes a proprietary chapel of the wealthy and the well-to-do middle classes.

And as if it was necessary to emphasise this deplorable division of classes in the House of God still further, an iron grid was drawn across the aisles at the time of public worship to separate the approaches to the free seats from those privately owned.

And so when the schools of the parish were built about 13 years afterwards, the only free accommodation in the Parish Church for the scholars was two pews, holding 10 people; and if in Lancashire, where Sunday schools are so popular, their welcome in the parish churches has been sometimes so meagre, is it a matter for much astonishment that they have occasionally developed an independence of their own?

As we look back and contemplate the difficulties through which Oldham Church has had to struggle for a proper recovery of her spiritual life, our wonder is not at her failure but that she can command so much whole-hearted devotion as she does, for it is almost impossible to conceive of a greater number of hindrances combining to defeat her spiritual work at a time when she was sorely needed to be at her best.

We have tried to tell her story of failure frankly during this period, for we feel we owe a full confession to many who have been hindered who should have been helped, and to a community that should have been much better served, whilst a chastened sense of past mistakes may be the best incentive to try and redeem the past in the future.

However, those who were responsible persons at the time acted, we must not doubt, with perfect conscientiousness, and believed they were doing what was best, indeed, if we may trust the published reports of the period, the

grandiloquent descriptions of the building and its opening ceremonies disclose only how perfectly satisfied all were with their great achievement. Under date of July, 1830, the following descriptions were published:—

“OLDHAM CHURCH.—There is much likelihood that this splendid structure will be opened for divine worship in a very short time. The interior is uncommonly beautiful and imposing, the painting being nearly finished throughout.

“It is now confidently ascertained that this gorgeous and splendid place of worship will be opened on Sunday, the 12th of December next, for a temporary purpose, on which occasion the noble and excellent organ, said to be the best in the kingdom, will be conducted by Mr. Knyvett for the first time; but it is reported that the grand opening and musical festival to take place on that opportunity is postponed till the early part of next spring.”

“OPENING OF OLDHAM CHURCH.—On Sunday last (December 12th, 1830) the new parish or parochial church at Oldham was opened for divine service the first time since its late re-erection. The splendour and beauty, with its noble organ (erected by Messrs. Elliott and Hill, of London), contributed to attract a full, respectable, and even fashionable congregation. In the forenoon the Rev. William Johnson, vicar of Mottram, Longdendale, in Cheshire, delivered an impressive sermon from . . . and in the evening another glowing and elegant discourse was made on the occasion by the Rev. John Handforth, curate of Ashton-under-Lyne. The high musical talents of the vocal performers tended in a great manner to render the scene sacredly and sublimely delightful to the assembly. Mr. Knyvett, who ranks high as an organist, conducted that fine-toned instrument, and Mrs. Knyvett, Mr. Isherwood, Mr. Hudson, and others, whose superior voices were assisted by a full choir.”

To these must be added Mr. Edwin Butterworth's description of the interior. “The inside is truly neat;



MR. HODGSON FOWLER'S DESIGN FOR A
NEW CHOIR.

its noble organ, splendid stucco work, costly window, attractive pulpit, and handsome private pews, with about 120 free seats, constitute the beauty and ornament of the interior."

But, as we have already remarked, the time was unfortunate in more senses than one for a great Church effort which should have added so much vigour and advancement to The Church's service of this great industrial community.

Successive incumbents and some good laymen, and notably the late Col. Lees, have done their best to rid the Church of the incubus of the privately owned pews, and about ten years ago two bays in the nave were cleared and replaced by handsomely carved open oak benches. Since then, by the friendly and generous co-operation of the owners and trustees of most of the remainder, many of whom have entirely surrendered their rights to the Vicar and wardens, it is to be one of the achievements of the quincentenary year to re-cover and re-seat the remainder for the public good.

But even when this is done there still remains a chancel to be built in order to complete the Church, and Mr. Hodgson Fowler, the architect in charge of Durham, Lincoln, and Rochester Cathedrals, has produced a particularly beautiful and dignified design, which, by its own merits, found a place in the Royal Academy, and we encourage the hope that some loyal son or daughter of Oldham Church will one day build the choir and so complete the Church, and thus confer a public benefit upon religion in Oldham, and secure the gratitude and prayers of those who come after them.

THE BELLS.

The bells of Oldham Church have always been the subject of much popularity and affection, and the history of them is not difficult to trace.

Until 1486 our moorland forefathers were called to their daily devotions and reminded of the pleading of the precious Sacrifice by one bell, which, by its elevated position, would be well heard along the country side; but after Sir Ralph Langley had made his restoration of the old chapel in 1406, he still further added to his interest in his moorland flock as patron by being instrumental in adding three bells to the tower.

“Sept. 24th, 1486.—Ralph Langley, Parson, of Prestwich, witnesseth that he has received from the hands of divers inhabitants of Oldham the sum of £10 in part payment of £20 to the intent to buy 3 bells for Oldame Chapell; the said Ralph to buy the three bells and cap them, stock them, clapper them, and hang them, and make them ready to the ringing, and if so be the cost comes to more than £24, the said Parish to pay the over plus, and if it happen the three bells in all costes be under £24, then the said Ralph the remainder of the said £24 to pay again to the Parish; and the other £10 to be paid to the said Ralph which in half a year the bells be able to be ringed.”

And this is the number recorded in the indenture made for the King in the sixth year of Edward VI., 1553, viz., “Four great Bells.” These served the Church until the early part of the 18th century, when evidently there arose a desire to possess a peal upon which the changes could be rung, and we find among the churchwardens’ accounts for the year 1722 the following entries:—

“SIX NEW BELLS erected in Oldham Church. The Church Wardens’ Accounts state:—‘The following is an

Assessment within the Parish of Oldham, Co. Lanc., for Repair of the Church of Oldham, with other necessities, In and Concerning the same, and for the Running down of FOUR OLD BELLS with the Addition of Two NEW ONES. In the year of our Lord, 1722. Assessed this 22nd day of Feby., 1722, by us whose names are subscribed.

Thomas Bent	}	Churchwardens.
George Travis		
James Schoales		
John Wild		
his x mark		
Ben Dawson		
Tho. Bent		
James Buckley		
Ralph Houlden		
David Harrop.		

	£	s.	d.
Imprimis New Metal for the Bells	139	16	3
Item The Hanging of the Bells.....	28	5	0
„ For the Carriage of the Bells	13	10	0
„ For our Expences and other matters	1	5	3
„ For Church Expences	2	3	6
„ More in the Church Expences	5	18	0
„ Wine for the Church.....	6	0	0
„ For “Bred,” Carriage, and Bell Ropes	2	0	0
	198	18	0

“These bells bore the following inscription: ‘Thomas Bent, John Wild, George Travis, James Scholes, Churchwardens, 1722.’

“One of the Bells is now in use at St. Peter’s Church, another at St. James’s Church.”

About twenty-three years later the following interesting articles were drawn up and signed between the Church officials and the ringers:—

“June 11, 1745.—RINGERS’ ARTICLES.

“It is this day agreed by and between Samuel Townson, of Oldham, Clerk, John Woolfenden, John Wallwork, Ralph Brown, and Jonathan Taylor, Churchwardens of

the same, upon the one part, AND Robert Dalton, Abraham Milns. James Milns, Isaac Gartside, Jno. Wallwork, and John Mellor, as Ringers, are to Ring the Ringing for the whole service for one whole year from the 13th instant till the 12th day of June, 1746. Ringing upon 11th and 30th days of October, the 5th day of November, the 25th day of December, 1745, the 29th day of May, and the 11th day of June, 1746, together with all Sundays and other Sermon days whatsoever that shall happen in the said year.

“AND the aforesaid Samuel Townson, Minister, John Wolfenden, John Wallwork, Ralph Brown, and Jonathan Taylor, Churchwardens for and in Consideration of the said premises, Do PROMISE unto the said Ringers for one Whole Year as aforesaid the sume of ffoure Pounds of good and Lawfull Money of Great Britain at two Severall Payments usuall. In Consideration of which sume the said Ringers shall and will Ring and Towl half an hour each Sermon day always beginning at such a time as public Notice is given in the Church by the Minister, Excepting upon Sacrament Days, when they shall begin to ring Half an Hour later in the afternoon than usual. AND also the said Ringers shall and will forfeite and pay to John Mellor the sum of Two PENCE EACH that is not ready in the Steeple or other wise provide one in his room except some reasonable excuse to be approved on by the Churchwardens for the time being. AND to Ring the said half hour both before and after noon, and Also the whole set of Ringers shall and will forfeit and pay for any Gross or Bodily neglect the sume of Twelve pence to the said Churchwardens. Except some reasonable excuse to be approved of by the Minister and Two Inhabitants constantly or commonly attending the Church. And it is further agreed that any Four of the said body of Ringers shall have a power to turn out any one of the same Ringers for any misbehaviour when and as often as they please.

“ Signed by me,

his

“Jno. x Jackson.”
mark.

The Oldham Ringers soon began to distinguish themselves, as the following achievements show :—

“July 18, 1763. — Change Ringing at Rochdale.

“This day, Monday, the RINGERS from OLDHAM rung on the Rochdale Church bells, ‘The Crown Bob,’ and the whole ‘Peal of Grandsire Bob,’ without standing or falling a Bell, the whole amounting to One Thousand and Eighty Changes, and perform’d in Fifty-two Minutes.”

“January 7, 1771.—Change Ringing contest. The Bells lately erected at St. John’s Church, Manchester. 11 sets of Ringers competed. The first prize, £3 3s. od., was awarded to the Oldham Ringers.”

The Churchwardens’ accounts also disclose some of the interesting national and local events when the bells were used. In the year 1776 --

	£	s.	d.
Paid the Ringers for Ringing when the nues came of the			
King’s Troops having landed at Long Iland	0	3	6
Paid the Ringers for Ringing when the nues came of King’s			
Troops took possession of New York	0	3	6

When the scheme for building the present Church was undertaken it was determined to have a new grand peal of bells, and Messrs. Mears, of London, were instructed at a cost of £1,100 to cast a peal of twelve, and so Oldham was put in possession of one of the three peals of twelve in Lancashire, the other two being Ashton-under-Lyne and S. Nicholas, Liverpool, and so far as the bells are concerned, nothing could have been more satisfactory than their unqualified success, and for generations we hope they will continue to give voice to joy and duty and solemnity in our midst.

The following accounts show how much they were welcomed in Oldham, and the writer has spoken with

several persons who could remember their arrival and of their lying in the churchyard for some days :—

“June 21, 1830.—BELLS FOR OLDHAM CHURCH.—A new peal of twelve bells for Oldham Church are now on the road from London, where they have been founding since about last August, by Messrs. Mears and Co. They are expected to arrive here at the commencement of the ensuing week, when a merry feast will take place on the occasion. The weight of the tenor bell is 33cwt.”

“June 28, 1830.—OLDHAM CHURCH BELLS.—On Monday morning last this new peal of bells, 12 in number, arrived by a fly boat from London, at Pickford’s warehouse, Manchester, from whence they were conveyed to Oldham, which place they reached about six o’clock in the evening, by two carriages, drawn each by four horses. On entering Oldham a band of music and a vast crowd of spectators met and preceded them to the churchyard, where they now lie, awaiting the completion of a month or two, to raise and ring them in the noble steeple.”

“July 12, 1810.—BURIAL OF KING GEORGE THE FOURTH.—On Thursday last, on the occasion of the burial of his late Majesty George IV. at Windsor, ‘Oldham,’ like the surrounding towns, evinced a great degree of respect for the deceased Sovereign. The shops were closed during the day, the largest bell of the new peal lately arrived was string to ring a deep, solemn, mourning toll on the occasion, the steeple was surmounted by the British flag.”

When the first part of the restoration of the Church was undertaken, about 10 years ago, the frame in which the bells were hung was found to be unsafe, and the first thing done was to re-hang in an iron frame the twelve bells. The following tablets in the ringing chamber record this and other events :—

LAUDATE DOMINUM IN EXCELSIS.

The twelve bells of Oldham Church were re-hung in a new frame and the tower substantially restored in 1897, at a cost of £641 14s. 6d., and were re-dedicated on August 14th the same year.

On Easter Day, 1898, the ringers of St. Mary's rang a true and complete peal of Grandsire Catons in three hours and a half, consisting of 5,039 changes

Ringers: 1st John Butterworth, 2nd Samuel Elson, 3rd James Priestley, 4th Fred Crossley, 5th Edwin B. Shaw, 6th Samuel Stott, 7th Fred Cocks, 8th John Davies, 9th James Siddall; tenor, James Wood; Samuel Stott, conductor. George Perry-Gore, vicar; Samuel Wilson, Henry Kauntze, Thomas Mannock, J. W. Buckley, wardens.

On the 30th day of September, 1783, was rung in the old tower 10,080 changes of Bob Major, in 5 hours and 40 minutes, performed by Thomas Kay (composer and conductor), 2nd John Wolstencroft, 3rd William Dawson, 4th Daniel Mills, 5th James Ogden, 6th Joseph Mills, 7th Joseph Jackson, 8th James Mills.

On Monday, the 4th day of January, 1784, was rung in the old tower 14,480 changes of Bob Major, in 8 hours and 44 minutes. 1st Thomas Kay (composer and conductor), 2nd John Heywood, 3rd William Dawson, 4th Daniel Mills, 5th James Ogden, 6th Joseph Mills, 7th Joseph Jackson, 8th James Mills.

On the 24th day of October, 1807, was rung in the old tower 15,120 changes of Bob Major, in 8 hours and 46 minutes, performed by—1st James Taylor, 2nd Robert Coope, 3rd John Newton, 4th Joseph Newton (composer and conductor), 5th Jeffrey Lomax, 6th Joshua Kershaw, 7th William Rigby, 8th John Whitehead.

On Monday, the 12th day of February, 1821, was rung in the tower of the old Church Mr. Eversfield's peal of Kent Treble Bob, consisting of 14,016 changes, in 7 hours and 26 minutes, being the greatest number of changes ever rung in the United Kingdom in the above-mentioned peal, performed by—1st Joseph Newton (conductor), 2nd James Mills, 3rd John Brierley, 4th James Taylor, 5th William Rigby, 6th James Chadderton, 7th John Whitehead, 8th James Jackson.

On Shrove Tuesday; February 15th, 1825, was rung in the old tower 9,999 changes of Grandsire Major, in 5 hours and 22 minutes.

This noble peal of 12 bells was first rung on September 2nd, 1830. On Christmas Day, the same year, was rung a true and complete peal of Grandsire Cinques, consisting of 5,126 changes, being the first peal of that length ever rung on these bells, which was well brought round in 3 hours and 28 minutes by the following persons:—1st Joseph Newton (conductor), 2nd John Jackson, 3rd John Newton, 4th Jeffrey Lomax, 5th Moses Stopherd, 6th James Mills, 7th William Rigby, 8th John Brierley, 9th James Jackson, 10th Abraham Jackson, 11th Thomas Chadderton, 12th Samuel Siddall.

On the 7th day of November, 1831, was rung in this tower a true and complete peal of Kent Treble Bob Maximus, consisting of 5,040 changes, which was nobly brought round in 3 hours and 37 minutes.

On the 6th day of March, 1832, was rung in this tower 7,392 changes Kent Treble Bob Maximus, in 5 hours and 14 minutes. Weight of the tenor, 34cwt.

On Monday, November 18th, 1844, was rung in this tower a true and complete peal of Kent Treble Bob Royal, in 3 hours and 29 minutes. This peal consisted of 5,000 changes.

Those merry bells will still ring on,
And shall do so when we are gone.

On Friday, January 1st, 1847, was rung in this tower a complete peal of Kent Treble Bob Cinques, in 3 hours and 35 minutes. This is the first on record of Treble Bob Cinques, and consisted of 5,104 changes.

Those joyous hours have passed away,
When many a heart that once was gay
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more these evening bells.

On Saturday, October 31st, 1863, was rung on the first eight bells in this tower Mr. John Holt's original peal of Grandsire Tripples, in one course, consisting of 5,040 changes, in 2 hours and 57 minutes.

On Saturday, March 30th, 1867, was rung in this tower a true and complete peal of Grandsire Cinques, consisting of 5,015 changes, which was well brought round in 3 hours and 38 minutes.

THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH AND NAME OF PATRON SAINT.

There has been a certain vague tradition that the Church was dedicated to S. Paul, but the only authority for this is that a certain stone in the foundation of the present building is said to bear this name as an inscription, and that some of the ringers' tablets in the belfry bear S. Paul; but there can be no possible doubt that the Patron Saint of the ancient parochial chapel was like the Mother Church of Prestwich, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and was associated with the Feast of the Assumption, which falls on August 15th (new style), but which fell in the old style (before 1752) on August 26th.

This associates our Patronal Festival with the traditional "Oldham Wakes," which always falls in the last week of August, and, as is well known, these Wakes, or *Feasts* or *Fairs*, are almost invariably connected with the ancient dedication of the Parish Church.

A similar confusion arose some years ago at Prestwich because the Mother Church had sometimes been described as S. Bartholomew's, and the Rev. J. H. Kidson, who edited the "Old Deeds of Prestwich," gives a very lucid explanation of how the mistake probably arose, and points out how in Puritan days the extreme Protestant party exhibited strong aversion to any association with the name of the Holy Mother of our Lord, and attempted to exclude the Magnificat from the Prayer Book, discouraged the observance of saints days, and changed the name "parishioners" into "congregation," "priest" or "rector" into "minister," "S. Mary" into "Prestwich Church," and thus purposely discredited the Patron Saint, but the temper which thus aimed to disturb the religious dedication could not so successfully obscure the secular association, and so an old Church divine of 1660, in a poem prefaced to Sparke's *Scintilla Altaris*, says:

These saints in these our iron times,
When piety and learning both were crimes,
Have had their Feasts and Fasts put down outright,
And all their days extinct in envious might;
Long the faithful *Fairs* did them retain;
Exiled our Church, 'ith town they do remain.

And it is now an added interest to the present writer that in the Wakes week of 1893 he saw drawn up before the Church one of the last rush carts to have been brought into Oldham, this custom of changing the rushes in the Church being also associated with the Patronal Feast.

But to still further remove all possible doubt on this point, an ancient will of one Rauf Chetham, of Crompton or Riton, bearing date September 12, 1537, and previously mentioned, makes the following request:—

“My body to be buried within the Church of *Our Blessed Lady of Oldham*, before the ‘quere door.’” Commonly, however, the Church was spoken of and described in early days (1406) in the precept of William de Neuhaigh, Archdeacon, as *The Chapelry or Chapel of Oldham*, and by 1552, in the inventory for Ed. VI. of Church goods, as *The Parish Church of Oldham*; and by 1629, in a lease of land to a family of Tetlows, as *Oldham Church*. “And also libertie to sitte in one stall or forme in ‘Ouldham Church,’” and down to quite recent times the most familiar title of the Church has been “Oldham Church.”

Butterworth in his history of Oldham, 1827 edition, describes it as the Parochial Chapel of Oldham, dedicated to S. Mary, and his son Edwin, in his history published in 1832, two years after the erection of the present Church, corrects the mistake by saying the Church is dedicated to S. Mary and not to S. Paul, as generally stated.

The above authentic evidence helps us to conclude that whilst in ordinary terms the Church has been known as Oldham Church, yet the ancient dedication is under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

When the present building was completed there appears to have been no proper service of dedication observed, but on December 12, 1830, there was conducted what is described at the time as an “opening service,” and it has been the annual commemoration of this “opening service” which has been observed since, and not the proper Patronal and Dedication Festival, which should be held really on the last week of August or “Wakes week.”

SOUTH SIDE OF CHURCH.

MONUMENTAL TABLETS.

In White Marble.

Sacred to the memory of John Duncuft, M.P., of Westwood House, Oldham. He was a Magistrate for the Counties of Lancaster, Chester, and the West Riding of the County of York. He represented the Borough of Oldham in Parliament from 1847 to the period of his death, which took place on the 27th of July, 1852, in the 57th year of his age.

White Marble Tablet.

Sacred to the Memory of Elijah Hibbert, Esq., for many years a Magistrate of this County, who departed this life on the 10th day of March, 1847, in the 45th year of his age. Also Elizabeth, his widow. Died December 15th, 1864, in her 65th year.

White Marble Tablet.

The Gees, of Hollinwood :—

James Gee. Born Nov. 26, 1773. Died Nov. 3, 1829.

Esther Gee. „ July 5, 1773. „ Jan. 15, 1858.

John Gee. „ Jan. 20, 1800. „ Mar. 20, 1830

Thomas Gee. „ Mar. 28, 1816. „ April 15, 1842

William Winterbottom Gee. Born Feb. 5, 1814.

Died June 10, 1874.

White Marble Tablet.

Sacred to the memory of Thomas Barker. Born 2nd of March, 1759. Died 27th of March, 1839.

SOUTH-EAST SIDE OF SANCTUARY.

Henrietta Susannah Anne Rhys, aged 36 years. Died Dec. 29th, 1827.

Memorial Brass.

To the Glory of God and in memory of Rev. ALFRED JULIUS JAMES CACHEMAILLE, M.A., of Gonville and Caius College, Camb., and seventeen years Vicar of this Parish. Died 12th May, 1895. Aged 53 years.
Requiescat in Pace.

Memorial Brass.

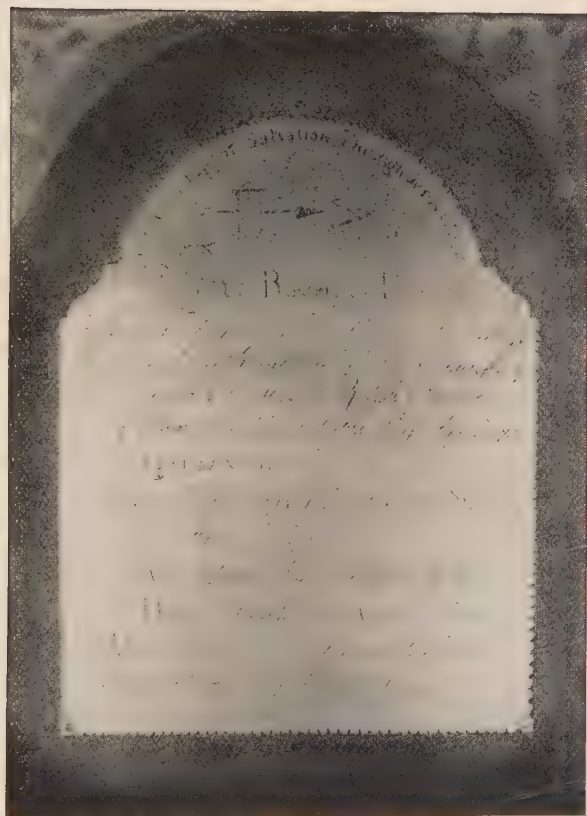
Here resteth the body of Ralph Taylor, of Bent, in ye Township of Oldham, Gentleman. Died the 15th day of Sept., 1785, in ye 70th year of his age. Also Elizabeth, wife of Ralph Taylor, of Bent, who departed this life April 22nd, 1763, aged 44 years. Also Elizabeth, his daughter, died May 29th, 1771, aged 25 years. Also Sarah, his second wife, died March 31st, 1772, aged 35 years. Also Anne, his daughter, died April 10th, 1786, aged 33 years.

NORTH-EAST SIDE OF SANCTUARY.

*White Marble Tablet in memory of Rev. John
Fallowfield.*

In Pious Memory of the Rev. John Fallowfield, who for 24 years was Incumbent of this Parish. Born 21st of Jan., 1780. Died 17th March, 1846. His mortal remains repose in a Vault beneath this Church. Beloved by his relatives, and respected by his friends. Also Mary Ann, his wife. Born July 15th, 1786. Died June 10th, 1858.

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor—yea,
She stretcheth forth her hands to the needy.



THE TAYLOR BRASS.

NORTH-EAST SIDE OF THE CHURCH.

A White Metal Tablet.

To the Glory of God, and in loving memory of Thirza Lucy Barstow. Born Sept. 30th, 1834. Died Oct. 29th, 1904. Requiescat in Pace.

NORTH SIDE OF THE CHURCH.

White Marble Memorial.

In remembrance of the late Joseph Buckley, Esq., formerly of this town, who died at Altrincham, Nov. 17th, 1851, aged 65 years. Also Mary, his wife, who died July 22nd, 1855, aged 65 years. This Monument is placed here by their only surviving Son and Daughter.

MEMORIAL WINDOWS.

No. 1.—SOUTH SIDE.

John Rowntree, died 7th Jan., 1860, aged 63. Mary Anne Rowntree, died 2nd Aug., 1860. William Peckit Rowntree, died 14th June, 1840, aged 4 years 6 months. Charles Arthur Rowntree, died Sept., 1845, aged 4 years 3 months. Subject: Faith, Hope, Charity.

No. 2.—SOUTH SIDE.

In Memoriam. Abraham Bellott, died 17th May, 1829, aged 50 years. John Charles Bellott, died 30th Oct., 1847, aged 25 years. Owen Henry Bellott, died 9th Sept., 1864, aged 40 years. Subject: The Resurrection.

No. 3.—SOUTH SIDE.

John Bamford, of Oldham, dedicated this window to God's glory, and in pious memory of his Parents and Brother, whose remains are interred at the north side of this Church. John Bamford, died 8th Aug., 1830, aged 51 years. Elizabeth Bamford, died 17th Oct., 1842, aged 71 years. Major Bamford, died 28th June, 1820, aged 17 years.

Subject: The Nativity.

1st Section.—Subject: Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation. Illustrated by aged Simeon with the infant Saviour in his arms.

2nd Section.—Subject: Mary hath chosen the good part. Illustrated by our Saviour rebuking Martha.

3rd Section.—Subject: And He went down with them and came to Nazareth. Illustrated by Jesus subject to his parents.

No. 4.—SOUTH SIDE.

This window was placed here to the Glory of God by John George Blackburne, in memory of his wife, Sarah, who died Nov. 6th, 1858. Subject: The Parable of the Talents.

No. 5.—SOUTH SIDE.

To the praise and glory of God, and in affectionate remembrance of Daniel and Mary Broadbent. This window is dedicated by their son, Thomas Broadbent, A.D., 1865. Subject: Christ on the way to Calvary, bearing his Cross.

No. 6.—SOUTH SIDE.

In Memoriam. James Barker, died 22nd April, 1857, aged 45 years. Thomas Barker, died 18th June, 1845, aged 39 years. William Barker, died 25th, July, 1841,

aged 26 years. Subject: The Nativity. The Death and the Burial of our Blessed Lord.

NO. 1.—NORTH SIDE.

Susannah Whitehead Bellott, widow of late Abraham Bellott. Born 26th Sept., 1793; died 26th Sept., 1879. Mary Gatley Littler, *nee* Bellott, widow of late Henry William Littler. Born 29th Nov., 1820; died 9th Jan., 1886. Subject: Jesus in the House of Martha and Mary.

NO. 2.—NORTH SIDE.

To the glory of God, and in loving memory of James Jackson, died Mar. 11th, 1842, aged 59 years. Also Ann, his wife, died Feb. 19th, 1842, aged 61 years. This window was dedicated by their affectionate daughter, Hannah Ellen Chadwick. 1885. Subject: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

NO. 3.—NORTH SIDE.

This window is dedicated to the glory of God, and in loving memory of her Parents and Aunt, by Marianne Hamilton. Peter Hamilton, died Sept. 15th, 1864, aged 41 years. Hannah Hamilton, died Mar. 16th, 1883, aged 58 years. Sarah Ann Winterbottom, died Oct. 8th, 1871, aged 40 years. Subject: The Visit of the Magi.

NO. 4.—NORTH SIDE.

To the glory of God, and in pious memory of James Rowland. Born 10th Sept., 1808; died 26th July, 1860. Also of his two daughters—Hannah, born 20th

June, 1838; died 2nd Aug., 1856. Eliza Anne, born 9th Aug., 1833; died 17th July, 1857.

Subject :

1st Section.—Christ Blessing Little Children.

2nd „ —The Ascension of Christ.

3rd „ —Christ, the Good Shepherd.

NO. 5.—NORTH SIDE.

To the glory of God, and in pious memory of Lydia Shiers. Born 10th Sept., 1808; died 26th July, 1860. This window is dedicated by her affectionate Children. Subject: Faith, Hope, Charity.

NO. 6.—NORTH SIDE.

To the praise and glory of God, and in affectionate remembrance of John Barstow, and Margaret, his wife. This window is dedicated by their Daughters, A.D., 1884. Subject: The Brazen Serpent as a type of our Blessed Lord's Crucifixion.

THE EAST WINDOW.

The window contains eight figures. The four upper figures represent the four Major Prophets—1st, Isaiah; 2nd, Jeremiah; 3rd, Ezekiel; 4th, Daniel. The figures are symbolical, showing the distinctive character of each Prophet's writings, viz., Isaiah, Reason; Jeremiah, Grief; Ezekiel, Anger; Daniel, Firmness.

The four lower figures represent the four Evangelists—S. Matthew: Holding a spear, the instrument of his martyrdom; S. Mark: Holding a manuscript in his hand; S. Luke: Holding a pen and book; S. John: The beloved Disciple with the poisoned cup in his hand.

III.

THE ORNAMENTS AND FURNITURE.

We have supposed that the old 15th century Church, which Sir Ralph Langley restored in 1476, preserved its general character of early Gothic, and so it is not difficult to recall to the mind's eye the general appearance of the interior when in the middle of the 16th century (1552) the commissioners made their visitation and inventory of the Church ornaments and furniture.

EXTRACTS FROM THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON.

CHURCH GOODS, LANCASTER, OLDHAM, $\frac{9}{52}$.

MEMBRANE 10.

“This Indenture, made the 12th day of October, in the sixth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Edward the Sixth (1552-3), by the grace of God, of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith and of the Church of England, and also of Ireland, in each the Supreme Head, between I, Edmond Trayfort and John Holcroft and Thomas Holt (Knight) on the behalf of our Sovereign Lord the King on the one part, and Ralph Cudworth, William Scott, Ralph Winterbottom, and John Buckley, churchwardens of the Parish Church of Oldham, and Lawrence Hall, priest, of Shay Chapel, within the said parish, of the other part. Witnesseth that whereas the saith Edmond Trayfort, &c., have delivered at the time of the sealing and delivery of these presents to the said Ralph Cudworth, &c.

- I. Two chalices.
- II. Four great bells.
- III. One sanctus bell.
- IV. Two hand bells.

- V. Two copes.
- VI. Four vestments.
- VII. Three altars, furnished with altar cloths.
- VIII. Two little candlesticks, brass.
- IX. One censor.

And to the said Lawrence Hall, priest at the said Shay Chapel,

- I. One vestment.
- II. One little chalice.
- III. One little bell.

Safely to be kept to the use of the said Sovereign Lord the King. The said Ralph Cudworth and Lawrence Hall for them and their executors do covenant and grant by these presents to and with the said Edmond Trayfort, &c., that the said chalices, bells, vestments, copes, and all the Church ornaments above said, shall not at any time hereafter be alienated, embezzled, or otherwise put away from the said Sovereign Lord the King, but shall be answerable and for the coming to the use of His Highness at such time and times as His Majesty or His Honourable Council shall demand the same." In witness, &c., &c.

I have transcribed into modern English the above extracts, and they are not only of parochial and local interest, but they also contribute to the increasing body of evidence which instructs us as Church people in the knowledge of what were the Church ornaments, uses, and vestments retained under reformed conditions in the Church of England, and in our own Parish Church in particular.

This indenture of Church ornaments helps us also as much as anything could to rehabilitate the old Church and form some idea of its interior and Church ordering.

As the Oldham Churchman of the middle of the 16th century entered his Parish Church the first thing he would be likely to observe would be the Font, which had



THE OLD FONT, c. 1400.



OAK FINIAL FROM ONE OF THE SCREENS.

probably stood in its place under the tower arch since the 14th or early part of the 15th century, and at which, for 150 or 200 years, his ancestors and others had been baptized.

The nave was probably at this time furnished with some of the substantial and carved oak open benches which survived until the old chapelry was demolished, but of which, alas, no traces can now be found.

An old parishioner who remembered worshipping in the old Church described some 10 years ago these stalls to the present writer, and spoke of the enclosed sides over which it was necessary to step to enter the bench, and which were evidently intended to enclose the rushes placed in the stalls for purposes of warmth.

As the worshipper moved towards the chancel he would observe what must have been then a handsome oak screen enclosing the chancel, whilst smaller ones separated the chapel from chancel and nave.

The present writer was able a few years ago to rescue a beautiful oak Finial, which, if compared with the picture of the interior, will be observed to correspond in character to the choir screen, a portion of which had survived when the painting from which our copy is taken was made.

The sketches of the screens in Sir Charles Barry's drawings also help us to imagine what the private chapels were like, although it is possible their screens belong to a later period.

As he would pass into the choir he would observe the Choir Altar, furnished with its altar cloth and two brass candlesticks, and if a priest happened to be celebrating the Holy Eucharist he would be probably vested in one

of the four vestments which the Parish Church then possessed.

On the north and south sides were the two private chapels, also with their furnished altars.

On the south side of the chancel, within the sanctuary, would probably be an open recess with three seats known as the sedilia for the use of the officiating ministers at the Eucharist, and near by, also in the south wall of the sacrum, a piscina, used for the ablutions after the celebrating of the Holy Communion; and on the opposite side, or in the east wall, probably an ambry or cupboard in which to keep securely the holy vessels.

Over the choir altar would be the great east window, containing probably at that time the arms of the Radcliffes in painted glass, but whether the Church windows contained then or at any later date any other old coloured glass we have no evidence to show.

These facts reclothe for us the old Church, and help us to imagine the general appearance of the Church in which our Edwardian and Elizabethan forefathers worshipped.

But times of change and anxiety had begun, and these in time had their effect both upon the ordering of the Church and the conduct of worship.

But as we shall see later in our record of the clergy, the conservative instinct of the people and the dislike of change of any kind probably preserved some of the old links with the past for a longer period in Oldham Church than in many other places; but by the time of the Restoration, when the revolution had swept by and the Puritan influence had found more or less its limits, the Church once more presented a certain settled order

and dignity in public worship, although now perhaps the dignity savoured more of the Erastian than the Ecclesiastical spirit, and to this period belong some of the changes which again more or less survived down to the latter part of the last century.

One great purpose of the Reformation was to restore to the people a fuller common worship, and to promote this the translation of the Common Prayers and of the Scriptures into English was effected, whilst the preaching of The Word was so emphasised by the Puritan influence that it jeopardised at last the proper proportion of the use of sacramental grace in religion, and threatened to divert the common worship from the adoration and glory of Almighty God to the narrower and more personal concern of individual welfare and experience.

Thus gradually the services of the sanctuary became obscured by the greater attention to the exhortation of the preacher, whilst side by side with this we have to remember that the restoration of religious freedom to the Church in the 17th century corresponded to the restoration of the Monarchical power in the State, which naturally tended to make the Church more official and less ecclesiastical. So when a Churchman of the 17th and 18th century came to worship in his parish church he probably found the services of the altar and the font less frequent, the vestments of the clergy disused, and the outward demeanour of the congregation perhaps less reverent than in former times.

The choir altar may have retained its two altar lights, as the Churchwardens' accounts of 1753 contain a payment to the parish clerk: "For cleaning candel sticks

3 timbs 6s.; but judging from our only picture of the interior certain pews did at some time invade the choir, whilst in the nave, what appears to have been a handsome Jacobean pulpit was erected against one of the columns on the north side. And somewhere in a prominent position was displayed a quaint figure of an angel supporting the notice board for the hymns and psalms, and now preserved in the vestry of the present building, whilst the Churchwardens' pew would be now dignified with silver maces bearing the stamp of the Royal Arms, as they have by this time become partly State as well as Ecclesiastical officials.

The mace of the senior warden is a particularly handsome one, and bears the names of the three townships, Royton, Chadderton, and Crompton, as indicating their then subordination to the Oldham vestry.

By 1703 the gallery was erected, and must have considerably altered the appearance of the west end of the Church, whilst over this was displayed a painted square of the Royal Arms.

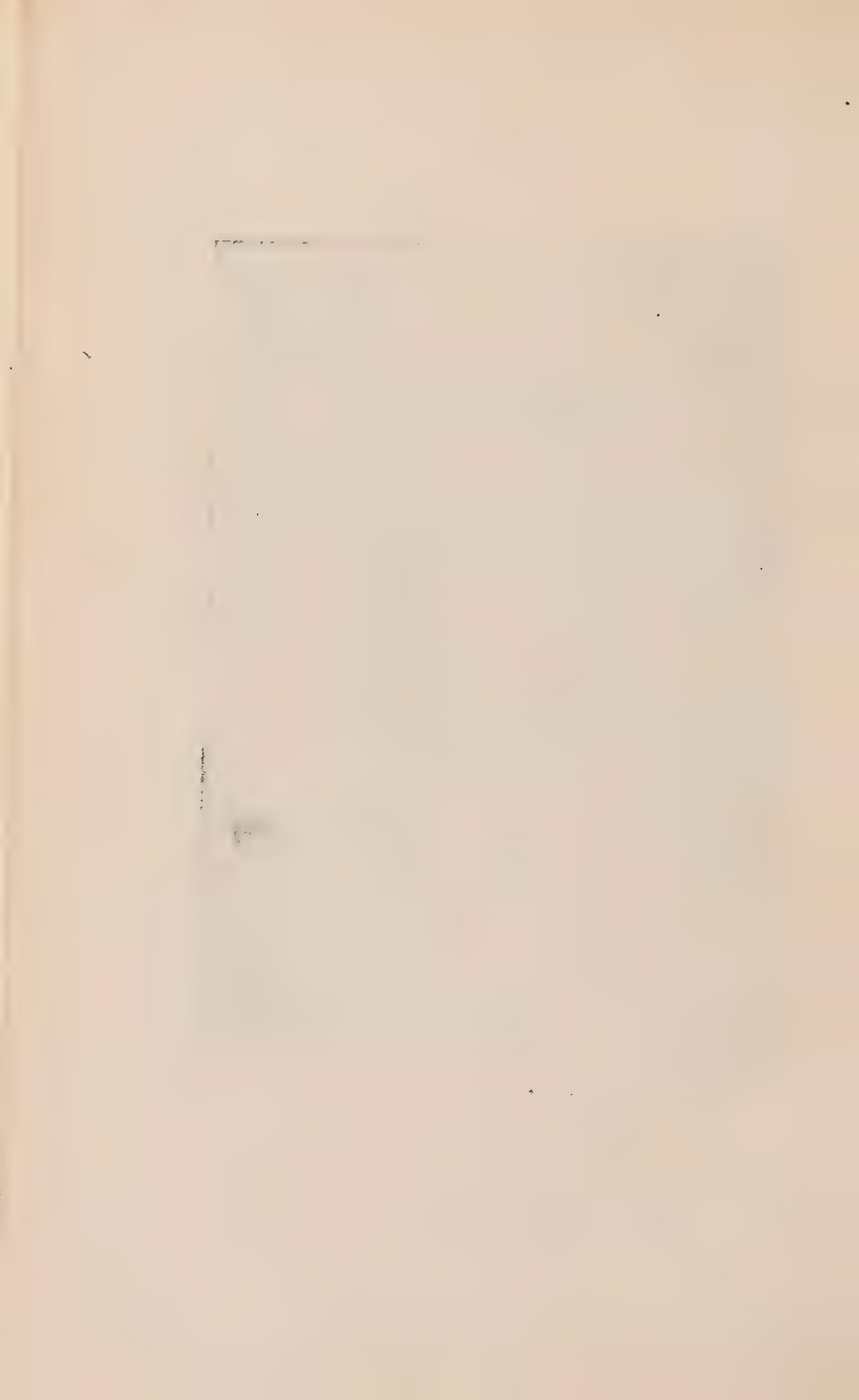
And this picture of Oldham Church in the 17th and 18th century, as we have tried to rehabilitate it, is a fair example of the general appearance of many of our old parish churches as they survived until very recent times.

THE OLD ORNAMENTS.

“A parcel-gilt chalice of silver, weighing 6oz., was given up to the Commissioners. Three large bells and a sanctus bell, weighing 8cwt., and of the value of 6*l.*, were put into the account of the collector, for which he claimed allowance, as he could not get possession of them. In the new inquiry which was instituted the churchwardens were summoned to explain; but though



MR. CALVERT'S DRAWING OF OLD CHURCH,
LOOKING WEST, 1824.



they 'hayde suffycient warnynge and knowledge to be before us at Whalley' on 7 April, 1554, they made default. The collector is, therefore, said to owe the amount because the bell was not yet certified at the date of settlement. The final commission of inquiry about these bells addressed by the King and Queen (1 & 2 Philip and Mary) on behalf of Parker, to Edmund Assheton and others, is given in abstract in the 'Duchy Calendar,' vol. ii., P 163. It was returned that Assheton and his fellow-commissioners had taken a perfect view and survey of the three bells and sanctus bell then remaining in the said chapel, and that neither Parker nor any other commissioner had taken or carried away any other bell or bells belonging to the said chapel of Oldeham, but that the same were there remaining."

The above, taken from Mr. E. Bailey's, F.S.A., notes on "Inventories of Church Goods," Chetham Society, shows that one of the two Oldham chalices was removed by the commissioners of Edward VI., but that the "Sanctus Bell" was retained after the visitation in the reign of Queen Mary, but what became of the two hand-bells and the censor we have nothing to show.

THE VESTMENTS AND COPES.

At the visitation in 1552 the Church possessed four chasubles and two copes, and in 1554 Thomas Mawdesley, Chantry Priest of Middleton Church, left by his will a "Vestment of green damaske" to the Chapel of Oldham, but whether this was to add a green vestment to the sequence of colours or to replace one or more already removed it is impossible to say.

It is interesting to observe that there is nothing noted in the inventory of 1552 in the ornaments and vestments of Oldham Church but such as are still sanctioned by the

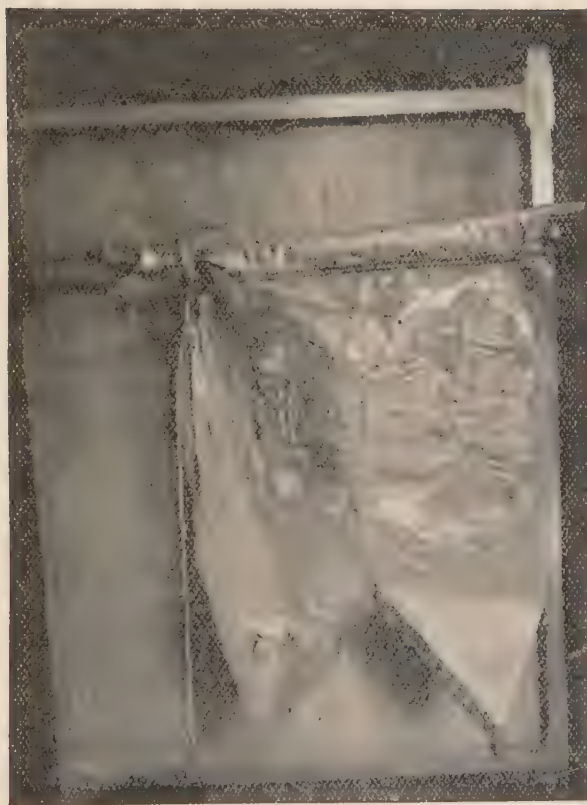
ornament rubric of the Book of Common Prayer, and have only ceased to be retained in some cases by the disuse of troubled times.

THE OLD CHURCH CHEST

Is a very massive chest, constructed of solid slabs of oak, 2 inches thick and at least 300 years old, but bears no name, or carving or style which would help to assign an exact date, but as it bears the three locks ordered for the safe keeping of the Registers in 1558 it may have been constructed then. The first mention of it we have been able to trace is 1720, when it was said to contain the deeds of the Oldham Grammar School. The present writer has ordered the contents and compiled the following inventory :—

CONTENTS OF OLD CHURCH CHEST, JAN. 24TH, 1902.

- 2 Bundles of Old Marriage Licenses.
- 2 Bundles of Land Tax Records, 17th and 18th century.
- 3 Bundles of Church Lay Books, 17th and 18th century.
- 2 Militia Lists, 18th century.
- 1 Servants' List, 18th century.
- 2 Old Day Books Relating to Baptisms.
- 2 Old Day Books Relating to Burials.
- 1 Old Day Book of Baptisms and Burials, 18th century.
- 22 Old Banns Books
- 2 Overseers' Books, one of them bound in rough calf.
- 2 Old Books Relating to Eyres' and Hawwards' Charities.
- 1 Bundle of Land Tax Records (large size).
- 1 Bundle of Apprentices' Indentures.
- 1 Bundle of Lists of Jurors, 18th century.
- 1 Bundle of Constables' Accounts.
- 1 Bundle of Old Warrants for the Removal of Paupers.
- 1 Bundle of Coroners' Certificates.
- 2 Rolls of an Inventory of Persons and Goods for Military Purposes.
- 4 Small Books of Surveyors' Accounts.
- Copies of the *London Gazette* for the year 1863.



THE OLD FLAG OF OLDHAM YEOMANRY.



THE OLD CHURCH CLOCK.

THE OLD FLAG.

The old silk flag suspended from the west gallery belonged to the Oldham yeomanry, and is reported to have been in use in the historical charter riot at Peterloo.

THE VESTRY.

The old vestry was a very ugly abutment placed on the east end of the chancel in 1777. It contained a small library of books, mainly presented by Dr. Bray's trustees and the successive incumbents of the parish.

THE OLD CHURCH CLOCK.

This is one of the many Church properties which, although sanctified by sacred use, has strayed into other hands, and was some years ago rescued from destruction, repaired, and presented to the Free Library by Dr. Yates, of Oldham. This clock was in the Church in 1737, as the churchwardens record a payment to Jonathan Leese of 5s. for repairs. Its position appears to have been on the west end wall of the gallery, as the singers in 1696 are to stand as near the clock as they conveniently can, and evidently it retained its place there until the old chapelry was demolished, as it can be just discerned in the painting made before the Church was destroyed.

THE OLD VESTRY TABLE

Is one of the dispersed properties of the old Church which the present writer has been able to recover during the last year.

It is a large and handsome oak table of the gate-leg and Jacobean style, but shows signs of great dilapidation

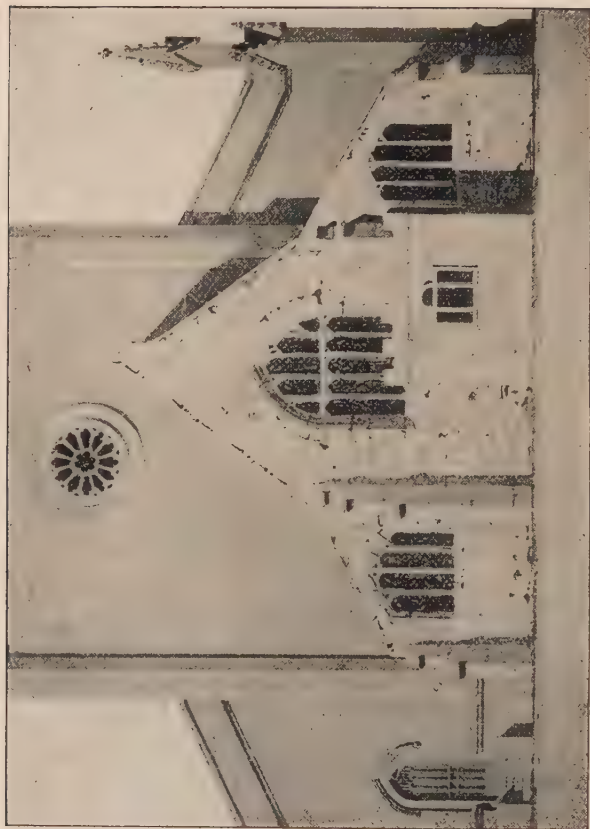
and rugged treatment during the course of its wanderings from its original use ; indeed, for a time it found a home on the stage of one of our local theatres.

In the facts we have endeavoured to collect and record we have largely the evidence of the Church fabric and ordering as it served the religious needs of our forefathers in what are called the Middle Ages, and reaching down to the time when the old Church was demolished ; and if there was an earlier Church (as we like to suppose there was) which linked the old early English Gothic Church with a Norman or Saxon predecessor, then we will let one of our ablest writers of Church history describe the processes of transition through which both the Fabrics and the Faith passed during these periods.

Mr. Wakeman writes :—

“ Yet England is covered with parish churches which form in themselves, for those who can read them, as complete an epitome of the religious life of the parish as the cathedral does of the religious life of the diocese. Let us try and collect the salient points of the history of such a Church as the Middle Ages spun out their web.

“ On the top of a hill sweeping down to the silver river which twines itself about its base, in a clearing of the oak forest, which then covered so much of the midlands of England, stood before the Norman Conquest a small hamlet with its Church of rough cast and timber. Not like the old Glastonbury Church of wattle and daub, but of stout oak timbers from the neighbouring wood as a framework, with its interstices filled with rough plaster. Such was the workmanship of the majority of English churches before the Normans came. But it was not good enough for the proud strangers. In the division of the land, the forest and its hamlet fell to the lot of one of the greatest of the followers of the Conqueror, and before many years had passed a new building began to be. It was built, as all Norman churches were built, of



SIR C. BARRY'S DRAWING OF OLD CHURCH, E., 1829.

stone. The stone was naturally that dug out of the hill—a red and white sandstone, though for parts where lightness was specially required, tufa was brought with incredible labour against the quick stream of the river, some sixty odd miles or more. The Norman Church consisted, like most of the Norman churches built at that time, of a nave and two small aisles, divided from the nave by round arched arcades resting on massive round columns of stone with square bases. The nave was low and roofed with a flat wooden roof. To the west rose a stately tower which opened into the nave by a fine horse-shoe arch. At its east end was a wall pierced with a low round arch leading into a small oblong chancel, against the east wall of which was the altar. The deeply splayed windows on either side of the nave and at the east of the chancel admitted but little light. No benches or carved woodwork relieved the sombre severity of the whole. In winter terribly cold, even in summer terribly dark, the house of God was still far more magnificent than any house of man in that remote country, and could not fail to affect the worshipper with a sense of deep solemnity.

“As the years passed on there came a change. The tithes and the patronage of the Church were made over as a gift to a Collegiate Church in a neighbouring town, and became the maintenance of a prebendary. Spiritually, probably, the change was bad for the parish, for it lost its resident priest. It was good for the material structure of the Church, for it was brought into close relations with a comfortable corporation. Soon the chancel was found too small, and in its place rose, in the thirteenth century, a spacious and lofty chancel of early English type, lighted with six large lancet windows on the sides and a triple lancet in the east wall, while the round arch between nave and chancel was stretched into a point. Another century and a half passed, and a still greater change was wrought. The south aisle was pushed out into a chantry chapel, dedicated to S. Mary, fitted with its sandstone altar, which stands there to the present day, lighted by three large windows with elaborate decorated tracery, carrying on its walls in rough distemper

the story of the Incarnation. Above the old Norman arcade was added a clerestory of decorated windows, surmounted by an open roof of massive oak timbers. Across the chancel arch now stretched a large wooden gallery or loft, carrying upon it in life-sized figures the representations, in painted wood, of our Lord on the Cross, with S. Mary and S. John on either side. From the windows looked down in rich variety the saints whom England then held dear. In the aisles the pictured glass told to the unlearned the story of redemptive love. . . .

"Thus the Church stood at the close of the Middle Ages, uniting the solemnity of its Norman nave to the grace of its decorated aisles and clerestory, and the noble beauty of its early pointed chancel, telling a tale of three centuries of Christian life, and three separate developments of Christian love. Thus it stood when the storms began to beat upon it, when the chantry was seized by the king and the tithe alienated to a courtier, when its noble rood was pulled down and its pictured glass broken to pieces ; when, in the course of ages, the tracery of its windows fell in, and its floors exuded damp, and white-wash covered its frescoes, and pews climbed up its columns. Thus it stands still when in a happier age loving hands have repaired the ravages of time, tender memories have clustered thick round wall and reredos and window, and reverent art, skilful as that of the earlier builders, has reanimated the whole with the spirit of faith."

SIR CHARLES BARRY'S DRAWINGS.

These are among the Church goods which have been recovered in the present writer's vicariate, and they are of particular value because they are the only authentic drawings of the interior of the old Church, and the only existing drawings which show the old chancel with the chapels.

The small water-coloured drawing in possession of Mr. Harry Clegg, of Llanfairpwll, Anglesey, by Mr. Edward



SIR CHARLES BARRY'S DRAWING OF PROPOSED NEW
CHURCH AND OLD CHURCH, S.E., 1829.

Calvert, is taken from the old choir, and so shows only the nave and the west end, and although it may be trusted to give a fairly faithful picture of the general appearance of the interior, yet could hardly be trusted in matters of exact detail. On the other hand, Sir Charles's drawings, which were made to embrace the old choir and chapels, would be drawings to scale, and would preserve careful attention in detail, and so we anticipate that these drawings will meet with much appreciation from the present generation, who have grown up with no conception of what the old chancel was like.

Two of the drawings are of the exterior, and exhibit the true ruggedness and simplicity of the old Church, and two of the interior, and fortunately reveal some portions of the old screens which enclosed both the north and south chapels, as well as two carved oak columns in the chancel, which suggest they are parts of a fine choir screen which at some time separated the nave from the chancel.

IV.

THE CLERGY.

In attempting any history of Oldham Church a complete list of the clergy in any way connected with the Parochial Chapelry is naturally a very important part of the effort, and here we must at once acknowledge our particular indebtedness to Mr. Giles Shaw's researches, and Mr. Booker's Memorials of Prestwich Church, and "Baines's Lancashire," edited by Croston.

The very intimate connection of Oldham with Prestwich as a Parochial Chapelry practically makes until very recent times (with few exceptions) the Rectors of Prestwich really the Incumbents of the Chapelry, as they possessed full power to take or farm out the glebe as they pleased, to control the fees, and to appoint curates-in-charge at whatever stipend they were disposed to offer, and it was not until 1773 that any fixed stipend became attached to the Incumbency of the Chapelry.

However, certain of the Rectors of Prestwich appear to have allowed considerably more jurisdiction to the curates-in-charge than others, and there appear to have been periods (notably during the Commonwealth) when the Minister at Oldham enjoyed an almost independent position, *e.g.*, when Dr. Lake was in charge at Oldham Church.

In the earliest days there can be little doubt that the Chapelry was served by priests attached to Prestwich, who went out from there as a centre to supply the spiritual duties of those dependent on the Mother Church, and were described by the different terms of "chaplains," "priests," "clerks," and "curates."

In time, as the Chapelry increased in importance, the Chaplain would become resident on "Priest's Hill," and would be regarded as the priest or curate-in-charge of Oldham.

But at the best the parson of Oldham could never have been a person of very pampered luxury, and there seems a certain irony about the following charge:—"That at a visitation of the province of York, held in October, 1559, it was presented that the parson of Oldham kept no hospitality."

As the connection with Prestwich has always been so close, we have thought it best in drawing up the following list of clergy to place in a corresponding column a list of the names of those who were Rectors of Prestwich during the same periods.

Another difficulty which presented itself in compiling the list was to distinguish between the early clergy associated with Oldham in various ways and those who had actually served as priests of the Chapelry, and so we have tried to solve the difficulty by first drawing up a list of those with Oldham associations, but whose sacerdotal duties with the Chapelry are doubtful, and then to give the full list of those who, we can hardly doubt, were charged with spiritual duties in some capacity or other with Oldham Church.

CLERGY CONNECTED WITH OLDHAM CHURCH.

<i>Oldham.</i>	<i>Prestwich.</i>
1202 THOMAS THE PARSON. RANDULPH THE PARSON. (Farrer M.S.)	
1272 HENRICO DE OLDOM. (“ Clerico.”)	
1312 NICHOLAS LE CLERICUS. (E. Butterworth.)	WILLIAM MARKELOW, Rector.
1389 JOHN TAILLOUR, Chaplain. (Chetham Society.)	RICHARD DE PILKYNGTON, Rector.
1390 ROBERT WALKER, Capellano.	Do.
1452 LAWRENCE ASSHETON. (Chetham Society, vol. 103.)	RALPH LANGLEY.

CLERGY SERVING OLDHAM CHURCH.

<i>Oldham.</i>	<i>Prestwich Rectors.</i>
C. 1280 WILLIAM SCHEREWIND, Chaplain. (Prestwich old par. deeds.)	
1300 WILLIAM, Clerk of Halda hulme (Oldham). (Pres. Ch. deeds.)	WILLIAM MARKELOW.
1379 JOHN DE BLACKBURNE, Priest of Oldham Ch. (Townley deeds.)	RICHARD DE PILKYNGTON.
1411 THOMAS LE WYLDE, Curate. (Chetham Society.)	PETER DE LANGLEY.
1517 NICHOLAS COWPER, Capell de Owldam. (Chetham Society.)	THOMAS LANGLEY.
1534 } DOMINUS THOMAS SHEROCK, to } Curate. 1556 } (Chetham Society.)	SIR W. LANGLEY.
1567 } ROGER WRIGLEY, to } Curate. 1572 } (Chetham Society.)	Do.

	<i>Oldham.</i>	<i>Prestwich.</i>
1580 to 1611	THOMAS HUNT, Curate. (Chetham Society.)	WILLIAM LANGLEY and JOHN LANGLEY.
1585	RICHARD BATESON was Lector Oldham. (Farrer M.SS.)	
1619	ISAAC ALLEN, Curate. (Chetham Society.)	JOHN LANGLEY.
1641	WILLIAM LANGLEY, Curate. (Bailey M.SS.)	ISAAC ALLEN.
1646	HUMPHREY BARNET, Minister. (Chetham Society.)	TOBY FURNESS.
1647	JOHN WORTHINGTON, Minister.	Do.
1647	ROBERT CONSTANTINE, Presbyterian Minister.	Do.
1650 to 1654	JOHN LAKE, Curate.	JOHN LAKE.
1654 to 1662	ROBERT CONSTANTINE, Presbyterian Minister.	{ NATHAID RATHBAND. ISAAC ALLEN. EDWARD KENYON.
1664	JOHN WALLWORK, Curate.	EDWARD KENYON.
1667 to 1695	ISAAC HARPUR, Curate.	{ JOHN LAKE. WILLIAM ASSHETON.
1696	RICHARD SUGDEN, Curate.	W. ASSHETON.
1712 to 1730	JOHN HALLIWELL, Curate.	W. ASSHETON,
1730 to 1732	JAMES SUGDEN, Curate.	RICHARD GOODWIN.
1732 to 1773	SAMUEL TOWNSON, Curate.	JOHN GRIFFITH and LEVETT HARRIS.
1773 to 1818	THOMAS FAWCETT, Curate.	{ LEVETT HARRIS. JAMES LYON.
1818 to 1842	JOHN FALLOWFIELD, Incumbent.	JAMES LYON and THO. BLACKBURNE.

<i>Oldham.</i>		<i>Prestwich.</i>
1842 to 1861	{ THOMAS LOWE, Incumbent.	THO. BLACKBURN and JOHN RUSHTON.
1861 to 1864	{ DAVID M. ALEXANDER, Vicar.	HENRY M. BIRCH.
1864 to 1873	{ WILLIAM WALTERS, Vicar.	HENRY M. BIRCH.
1873 to 1876	{ WILLIAM F. WILBERFORCE, Vicar.	HENRY M. BIRCH.
1876 to 1892	{ ALFRED J. J. CACHEMAILLE, Vicar.	{ HENRY M. BIRCH. { WILLIAM T. JONES.
1892	GEORGE PERRY-GORE, Vicar.	{ WILLIAM T. JONES. { FREDERICK. W. COOPER.

We now proceed to give what information we are able as to the individuals and their spiritual work for the Chapelry.

THE CLERGY ASSOCIATED WITH OLDHAM.

1202. THOMAS THE PARSON.

Nov. 4.—At Lancaster Assize. Between Matilda, formerly the wife of Ralph Dagun*, plaintiff, and Thomas the Parson, and Adam the Clerk of Middleton, and Avice, wife of Ranulph the Parson, Matthew de Colwe, Thomas Chanceben, William, son of Ranulph, and Matthew de Quike, tenants, respecting dower which she claimed in the free tenement, which belonged to her husband, in Sholver. She released her right in consideration of 30s., which they gave her.

Mr. Bailey, in his translation of the Prestwich deeds, speaks of the Prestwiches who lived at Sholver, to the N.E. of Oldham, and one of these is named Thomas de Prestwich, suggesting a traditional name, but the Bishop of Bristol (Browne), in advising the present writer, says : " I do not think that at that early time (1202) there was a parson of Oldham. Parson would at that time only be

* Or, Tagun.

applied to a rector, and I do not think it is clear that Oldham had at that time a clergyman to itself. It is not clear that either of the parsons named was rector of Prestwich, though it is more than probable that one was."

1272-1307 (Edw. I.). HENRICO DE OLDOM ("Clerico").

Grant from John de Buron of Ryton to Robert de flaukoner, of lands bounded by Elicloghe, Wallesythe Milne broke, Ryle broke, Ryton walle, for his homage and service, rendering yearly the sum of 6s. 6d. in silver [s.d.]. (One of the witnesses to this deed was Henrico de Oldom, "Clerico.")

It will be observed he was a witness to a deed to one of the Byrons of Royton, and is named Henrico of Oldham, but this is not sufficient evidence to locate him as a clergyman to any particular neighbourhood.

1312. NICHOLAS LE CLERICUS.

E. Butterworth (p. 71) says:—"First mention of a clergymⁿ in con'ction wth Old^m is met with in a deed of gift on the part of William de Old^m of date 1312, in wh: occurs name of Nicholas le Clericus as one of the witnesses."

1389. Sep. 8.—JOHN TAILLOUR, chaplain, grants his lands in Om &c.—Chet. Soc^y xix., p. 112.

1390. ROBERT WALKER.

Richard de Tetlawe, confirms to Robert Walker, "capellano," a burgage and messuage in the vill of Oldham and Manchester.

1452. Sir or Dominus ASSHETON, Priest.

Mr. Ralfe Langley, Parson of Prestwich, leases Tithes of Oldham to Sr. Lawrance Assheton, Priest.

CLERGY SERVING THE CHAPELRY AS PRIESTS.

c.1280. WILLIAM SCHEREWIND, Chaplain.

Deed by Hamo de Oldum made over to John son of Geoffrey de Chadderton. A piece of land in the district of Oldum subject to payment of three silver pence to the Church of Prestwich. One of the witnesses was William Scherewind, Chaplain.

Mr. Giles Shaw in his annals adds we can safely

assume there was a church in Oldham at this early date, but our particular interest in William Scherewind is that he is the first priest whom we have any record of who probably ministered to the spiritual need of the Chapelry.

Bishop Browne says in his notes to the present writer: "The chaplain here (1280) may have been a priest serving the Oldham district, but I should prefer to think that he was one of the clergy attached to Prestwich Church. It was early for the idea that he was, as later chaplains so frequently were, the priest of a chantry in Prestwich Church."

1300. WILLIAM, CLERK, OF HALDA'HULME, was one of the witnesses of a grant of land in Chathyrton (Chadderton) by the then parson of Prestwich. And as Bailey in his Prestwich deeds says:—"Very noticeable is the name of Halda'hulme (the contraction mark indicating a m or n). This is evidently an ancient name of Oldham, the intermediate forms, found in old deeds, being Aldhulme and Oldhulme, and at this early time William was curate.

1411. THOMAS LE WYLDE.

Robert de Langley leases lands at Birchaw, Scolecroft, and Tatescroft, in Chadderton, to John le Wylde, and to Thomas le Wylde, his brother curate of Oldham.

Here we have a priest definitely stated to have the cure of souls at Oldham, and the date (1411) quite suits with this. Oldham by then was treated as an ecclesiastical district under Prestwich, and the clerk had cure of souls.

517. March 24.—NICHOLAS COWPER, Capell de Owldam, has a grant of a croft in Oldham from William Langley, Parson of Prestwich.

1534. Dms THOMAS SHEROCK, ap' Oldom, was Curate, being paid by William Langley, Rector of Prestwich.

Here we have the distinct case of the curate being paid by the Rector of Prestwich, and in the will of Rauf Chetham (1537) before-mentioned as desiring to be buried before the choir door in the Church of Our Blessed Lady of Oldham, he is described as Sir Thomas Shorroke, curate of Oldham, but by 1541 he is designated as parish priest of Oldham. Note.—The term “Sir” corresponds to the term “Dominus.”

1541. Aug. 14.—Sr. THOMAS SHORROCKS, Parish Priest of Oldham, has a lease from Edmund Assheton, of Chaderton, for 12 years, of 3 Closes in the field of Oldham, in his possession, paying yearly a pepper corn rent, but should the lands be exchanged with John Tetlaw of Ryeley for other lands Sir Thomas Shorrocks to have a proportionate part of the viii^l he has paid, returned.

He is also mentioned as witness in 1556, as Thomas Sherok, but although his name is spelt in different ways, there can hardly be any doubt but the same person is meant.

1567. ROGER WRIGLEY is mentioned as being in 1549 curate of Prestwich, when William Langley was parson of Prestwich, and so was probably placed in the cure of souls at Oldham 18 years later.

1580 to 1611. THOMAS HUNT.

1590. January 15.—Edmund Hopwood writes to the Archbishop of York. Asks favour for Mr. Hunt, curate and preacher at Oldham; does not know what is “enformed againste him,” but hopes the Archbishop will find him a “discreet, peaceable, and honeste man;” begs that, so long as he seeks the peace of the church, he may continue in his ministry.

1580. Thomas Hunt, M.A., Curate of Oldham. A Schoolmaster of great eminence. He was called a Puritan and a zealous preacher; he is mentioned in the Will of Mr. John Wild, Minister of Saddleworth, in 1592.

1590 October.—Thomas Hunte, “preacher at Oldham” (along with other clergy), were commanded to appear before the Bp. of Chester at Manchester and give evidence as to their conformity.

1604. Oct. 3.—Mr. Thomas Hunt, minister of Oldham, along with others who were styled “Ringleaders of Nonconformity in South Lancashire,” summoned before Bp. Vaughan of Chester at Aldford, on a charge of violating the Liturgy and Ceremonies of the Church. They were all publicly admonished and required to conform to the Liturgy and Ceremonies of the Church.

1606. Mr. Thomas Hunt, M.A., Minister of Oldham. First Master of the Grammar School.

1608. Oct. 11.—Visitation of the Chancellor of Chester, held at Manchester. It appeared in evidence that Mr. Thomas Hunt, Curate of Oldham, weareth not the Surplice in time of Public Prayers and in ministering the Sacraments, useth not the sign of the cross in Baptism, neither does he meet the dead corpses of such as come to be buried at the “Church Steele” (stile).

The above facts are of considerable interest as illustrating many points of the Puritan influence in the Church of England, and particularly in showing at what an early period Oldham came under Puritan influence. Mr. Hunt was evidently like some of his successors, a person of considerable conviction and ability, and as he remained in charge of Oldham for more than 30 years, he must have had considerable influence in propagating the tenets of the Puritan party, and as he was made in 1606 the first master of the Oldham Grammar School, he evidently commanded considerable popularity. For part of the time he appears to have been assisted by Richard Bateson (1585), who is described as Lector Apud Oldham.

In less than 30 years the Dominus and Parish Priest of Thomas Shorrocks (1541) has become in the person of Thomas Hunt “the Minister and Preacher at Oldham,” and it must have been a great shock to reverent laymen like Rauf Cheetham to find the conduct of the public worship of their Parish Church strangely altered and impaired.

The citing of Mr. Hunt before his superiors reveals

how hard it was sometimes during these Puritan days for the bishops to preserve even the simplest reverence in Divine worship and loyalty to the principles of the Book of Common Prayer.

The term "ringleader of Nonconformity," as applied to Mr. Hunt, illustrates for us the original use and meaning of the term. Mr. Hunt was a Nonconformist as distinct from what is now understood as a Dissenter or Free Churchman. Before the separation of 1661 the Nonconformists, so far as the clergy were concerned, were generally priests in holy orders, who on certain points of doctrine or conduct of public worship declined to conform to the then standards and principles of the Book of Common Prayer, but remained still in communion with the Church of England; but when at the Restoration both those in holy orders and those ordained after the order of the Presbyterians and Independents declined to accept the principles of the Prayer Book and Episcopal jurisdiction they went out of the Church of England and separated themselves from her communion and control, and so became what were then known as Separatists or Dissenters.

In restoring the use of the ornaments, the surplice, the sign of the cross, and other directions of the Prayer Book, it is sometimes alleged that their use are innovations in our public worship, whereas it is well known to any student of the Book of Common Prayer that the real disturbers of Church order and rule were Puritans like Thomas Hunt and their followers, and that those who recovered their use were the restorers of what had always been the Churchman's rightful heritage, although obscured by disuse and long custom.

And it should be observed, as disclosing the mind and real intention of those in authority in those troubled times, that the one rubric which rules the use of all ornaments of the Church and vestments of the clergy was carefully revised and deliberately reinserted at each fresh revision of the Book of Common Prayer, and which, placed on the first page of the public offices, requires it to be noted "That such ornaments of the Church, and of the ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained and be of use, as were in this Church of England, by the authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth.

ISAAC ALLEN (1619 to 1632) was probably curate of Oldham for about 13 years, when he became Rector of Prestwich. He had married a niece of Edmund Assheton, of Chadderton, and patron of Prestwich, and probably owed his preferment to this connection. He appears to have been, in contrast to his predecessor, a strong and loyal Churchman, and for the sake of his attachment to Episcopacy and Church order was afterwards, when Rector of Prestwich, assailed in the Rectory House, which the Presbyterians partly demolished, and imprisoned him at Manchester. Afterwards there was an unsuccessful attempt to secure his appointment again to the cure of Oldham. He then retired to Ripponden, in Yorkshire, where Mr. Oliver Heywood, who speaks of him as "old W. Allen, who had been parson of Prestwich, but turned out in war time for not taking the covenant."

WILLIAM LANGLEY (1641) was the last of the curates to be appointed under Episcopal rule, for by the time his successor was appointed the bishops had been excluded

from authority, the Prayer Book suppressed, and Presbyterianism established.

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|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1646. HUMPHREY BARNET. | } | Presbyterian Ministers. |
| 1650. JOHN WORTHINGTON. | | |
| ROBERT CONSTANTINE. | | |

1646. Oct. 2.—Presbyterianism having superseded Episcopacy, the County of Lancaster was divided into nine classical Presbyteries, Oldham being in the first classis. The Minister and Elder fit for Oldham were Mr. Humphrey Barnet, Minister; Edward Sandiforth, gentleman, Elder. The first meeting was held at Manchester, 16th Feb., 1646. Oldham was not represented either by Minister or Elder. Mr. Barnet must have left Oldham, for at a meeting of the classis held March 4 Mr. John Worthington is mentioned as being desired by the congregation at Oldham to be their Minister.

1647. April 15.—Mr. John Worthington, B.A., ordained at Manchester and appointed to the work of the Ministry at Oldham Church. (Worthington must not have staid long at Oldham, for during the same year we find)

Nov. 16.—Mr. Constantine presented by the people at Ouldham for allowance to be their Minister, appeared to be an ordained minister, formerly had officiated at Fairfield & Buxton in Derbyshire. A letter written to the congregation there to know the said Mr. Constantine condition, whether he might freely come to the said people at Oldham.

Dec. 8.—The Classis write to Buxton & Fairfield to know something further of Mr. Constantine, answer returned that he is freely discharged from those places. The Classis hath given him approbation for Ouldham, the people petitioning for him; had approbation delivered him.

Mar. 3.—Mr. Robert Constantine signs the Harmonious Consent of the Ministers of Lancashire as Minister of Oldham.

By the above extracts it will be observed that the patronage and emoluments under Presbyterianism had passed from the bishops and lay patrons into the hands of Presbyterian assemblies called Classis, who reserved to themselves the right to either appoint or reject the nominees of the parishioners, and the above three Presbyterian ministers were appointed with the consent of the Classis at Manchester.

1648. May 3.—Oldham Congregation desire that they might not be pressed to set up the government at present because of some obstructions (though they be willing and desirous of it), but they hope these obstructions will shortly be removed: And they have time given them till the next class to see if those obstructions be then removed.

Sep. 29.—A petition brought in and attest by four men from Oldham against the validity of the election of elders at Oldham. The hearing of the business was deferred till the next classis.

Oct. 7.—Those of the congregation at Oldham that had petitioned against the election of elders at Oldham were appointed to bring in their exceptions, if they have any more than are in their petition the next classis.

Dec. 19.—The Parishioners at Oldham were appointed to produce witnesses to prove their exceptions against the elections of elders at Ouldham the next classis.

1649. Aug. 14.—The elders elected for Oldham are :—

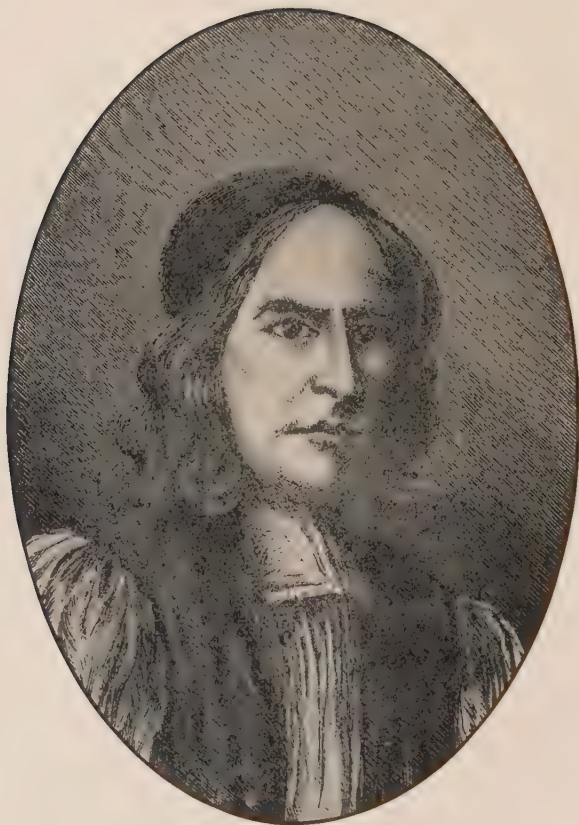
Mr. Henry Wrigley.
Edward Sandiford.
John Smith.
John Worrall.
John Lees.
Alexander Lomax.
James Lees.
Francis Clegg.
Joseph Hallowes.
John Travis.
John Scoles.

Examined and approved of.

1650. Jan. 8.—In the Oldham Church Register of this date there is recorded :—John Midgley, of Ouldham, was perished and sepult (buried). Vicars in his Dagon Demolished remarks :—“Mr. Midgley, Schoolmaster, having been hired by Mr. Ashton, a Justice of the Peace, to write against Mr. Constantine, going home that night, there having been a great snow on the ground and the weather bitterly cold, he was the next morning found dead in the snow, and only his finger and thumb of his right hand eaten or bitten off from his hand.”

Jan. 16.—The people of Oldham are to have notice to bring in their probation of their exceptions against the election of elders by them inhibited against the next classical meeting and upon defect herein that the classis will proceed to examination of the elders for the place elected.

Rev. R. Constantine refused the engagement for which Justice Ashton, of Chadderton, vigorously prosecuted him, so as to force him to remove, when upon an invitation he went to Burstall, in Yorkshire.



DR. LAKE.

There appears by the above to have been some objection on the part of Oldham parishioners both to the method of election and those elected to represent them, and that later on (1650) an agitation directed by Mr. Justice Ashton, of Chadderton, the late patron of Prestwich, against Mr. Constantine's ministry, resulted in the latter retiring for some years from Oldham; and there can be but little doubt that this Mr. Justice Ashton is identical with the Edmund Assheton who a few years before had appointed Isaac Allen to Prestwich.

*1650 to 1654. JOHN LAKE, D.D.

This worthy and famous Divine was a native of Halifax, Yorks., and Baptised at the Parish Church there Dec. 5. He received his first education at the Grammar School there, and whilst young, being about 13 years old, proceeded to St. John's College, Cambridge. When at College he was made prisoner along with the royal party, but escaping he fled to Oxford. On 26 July, 1647, he preached his first sermon as Lecturer at Halifax, but did not stay long. In 1649, Feby. 12, he was preacher at Prestwich, and a summons was sent him to appear before the Presbyterian Classis at Manchester. He did not continue long at Prestwich, for in March, 1650, he was officiating at Oldham. On Dec. 25, 1654, Dr. Lake, along with J. Milner, his assistant, resigned Oldham "Rectory" to R. Constantine. When he was officiating at Oldham Dr. Lake resided at Chadderton Fold, the house he lived in being still pointed out as Bp. Lake's house. He had a long controversy with the Presbyterian Classis at Manchester and Henry Wrigley, of Chamber Hall, and would not conform to the Classis.

On 21 May, 1660, we find he was Vicar of Leeds. In 1663 he was appointed Rector of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate-street, London, which he resigned before 10 June, 1670.

In 1667 he was preferred to the Prebendal stall of Holborn, in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, London, which he continued to hold until he was raised to the Bench.

In 1668 he was instituted to the Rectory of Prestwich; Patron Edmund Assheton, of Chadderton, esq., by whom he was collated.

16 July, 1670, to the Prebend of Frydaythorp at York, and on the same day to the Prebend of Halloughton, in Southwell, and to the Rectory of Lendreck, both in Nottinghamshire.

He was now Residentiary at York, and endeavouring to break the bad custom of walking in the body of the Cathedral during the

* Shaw's Oldham Annals.

time of Divine service. He was insulted by the rabble, who, after they had broken open the south door of the Minster, followed him home, and assaulted him in his own house. They even took off part of the tiling so that he was obliged to be rescued by Captain Honeywood, the Deputy Governor.

7 May, 1671, the Mastership of the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene, near Bawtry, was conferred upon him.

9 October, 1680, installed Archdeacon of Cleveland.

1682. having been nominated by William Earl of Derby, he was consecrated Bishop of Sodor and Man in Dec., at which time he resigned his Archdeaconry.

12 August, 1684, he was translated to the See of Bristol. He now resigned the Rectory of Prestwich, but obtained leave to hold his Prebend in commendam.

In the time of Monmouth's Rebellion, Bp. Lake was in London attending to his Parliamentary duties. By order of King James II. he went down to reside at Bristol, though he was at that time much afflicted with the gout, and narrowly escaped being taken by the Duke's forces.

The King was so well satisfied with his conduct that before his return he had nominated him to the Bishopric of Chichester, in which he was confirmed 19th October, 1685.

On 27 April, 1688, King James II., having renewed the Declaration he had set out the year before for liberty of conscience, to favour the cause of Popery, was resolved to oblige the clergy to read it in all their churches; but Bp. Lake, having first prevented the sending down the declarations into his diocese, went up to London, and after consultation with Archbishop Sancroft and five other bishops at Lambeth, they agreed to petition the King, and therein to lay before him their reasons which inclined them to disobey the Order of Council which had been sent to them.

This petition was delivered accordingly on the 18th day of May, and for this such as had signed it were cited to appear before the Council, where, refusing on account of their Peerage to give bonds to appear in the Court of King's Bench, the Archbishop and six other bishops (amongst whom was Bp. Lake) were committed to the Tower by a warrant signed June 8th, and on the 15th were brought to the King's Bench Bar, arraigned, tried, and acquitted on the 29th, to the great joy of the generality of the people.

On the accession of William III. he refused to take the oath of allegiance and supremacy from a conscientious regard to the oath he had sworn to King James II., believing his allegiance to the deposed Monarch to be indefensible, and voluntarily submitting to the penalty of deprivation rather than act against his conscience.

John Lake was one of the most distinguished divines during the Commonwealth and Restoration. He came

to Oldham in 1650, after having been at Prestwich for about a year, by the special invitation of the Oldham parishioners, and probably by the urgent wish of his friend Mr. Assheton, of Chadderton, and remained until 1654, when, after four years ceaseless strife with the Classis at Manchester, he resigned his charge to Mr. Constantine, who had been brought back by the Presbyterian authorities.

Except for the strong personal and local influence of Mr. Assheton, of Chadderton, it is difficult to understand how this uncompromising Churchman was allowed to minister either at Prestwich or Oldham, and certainly reveals that a large element of the people held and supported both him and his principles. Dr. Lake was one of the truest sons of the English Church, and, like his fellow-sufferer in the Tower of London (Bishop Ken), adhered to the Church of England as she is distinguished by her resistance of Puritan innovations on the one hand and Papal usurpations on the other, and the following testimony three days before his death reveals how loyally he retained his strong principles to the last:—

*August 27th, 1689, he made the following Declaration (which, no doubt, was meant as a vindication of this last act of his conduct) before Dr. Green, the parish minister; Dr. Hicks, dean of Worcester; Mr. Jenkins, his Chaplain; Mr. Powell, his secretary; and Mr. Wilson, his amanuensis:—

“Being called by a sick, and I think a dying bed, and the good hand of God upon me in it, to take the last and best viaticum, the Sacrament of my dear Lord’s body and blood, I take myself obliged to make this short recognition and profession.

“That whereas I was baptised into the Religion of the Church of England, and sucked it in with my milk, I have constantly adhered to it through the whole course of my life, and now if it so be the will of God, shall die in it, and I had resolved through God’s grace assisting me to have died so, though at a stake.

* Shaw’s Oldham Annals.

“And whereas that Religion of the Church of England taught me the doctrine of non-resistance and passive obedience, which I have accordingly inculcated into others, and which I took to be the distinguishing character of the Church of England, I adhere no less firmly, and stedfastly to that, and in consequence of it, have incurred a suspension from the exercise of my office, and expected a deprivation. I find in so doing much inward satisfaction, and if the oath had been tendered at the peril of my life, I could only have obeyed by suffering.

“I desire you, my worthy friends and brethren, to bear witness of this upon occasion, and to believe it as the last words of a dying man, and who is now engaged in the most sacred and solemn act of conversing with God in this world, and may, for ought he knows to the contrary, appear with these very words in his mouth at the dreadful tribunal.

(Signed)

“JOHAN, CICESTRENSIS.”

Mr. Giles Shaw in his “Notes and Annals of Oldham” has collected the voluminous correspondence of Dr. Lake with the Classis and a Mr. Wrigley, of Oldham.

One matter of personal interest to the present writer is that besides being one of Dr. Lake’s successors in the incumbency of Oldham Church, one of his connections is also the present incumbent of Halloughton, the prebendary of which Dr. Lake held when again Rector of Prestwich in 1670.

1654 to 1664. ROBERT CONSTANTINE now remained for 10 years the minister of Oldham, but at the Restoration declined as a Presbyterian to accept the principles of the Book of Common Prayer, and afterwards became the first minister of the Independents in Oldham.

1662. May.—Act of Uniformity passed.

By this Act anyone holding any office or position in the Church of England had to subscribe to the following :—

I, A. B., do declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled “The book of Common Prayer and administration of Sacraments and other rites and ceremonies of the Church according to the use of the Church of England, &c.

“The penalty for neglecting or refusing to make this declaration is deprivation ipso facto of all his spiritual promotions.

1664. JOHN WALLWORK was the first priest to minister in the restored services.

1667 to 1695. ISAAC HARPUR is chiefly distinguished, so far as our knowledge helps us, by his long incumbency of 27 years.

1712 to 1730. JOHN HALLIWELL, Curate, appears to have been the first clergyman to have begun the practice of signing the registers after having performed one of the occasional duties.

July 5.—Will of the Rev. John Halliwell, M.A., Curate of Oldham :—

Body to be buried in the Chancel of Oldham Church. To my Nephew Robert Halliwell, son of my brother William Halliwell, my Silver Tobacco Box, 2 Silver Spoons, 2 Silver Salts, and 2 Silver Watches. To my Nieces Mary and Ann Halliwell, my said brother's daughters, 2 Silver Spoons each. To Poor People of Oldham £5. To my brother William Halliwell all my goods, &c., at Tunley devised to me by the Will of my Father, Robert Halliwell. To John Halliwell, of Liverpool, sailor, £20, if he be living and comes to demand it. All the residue of my goods and chattels to my loving wife Mary Halliwell, and I devise to her All my Messuages in Greenacres and Saddleworth for her life, the reversion to Robert Halliwell, my Nephew, charged with £100 to my niece, the said Mary Halliwell, and £100 to my Niece Anne. Wife sole Executrix.

Signed,

JOHN HALLIWELL.

Witnesses :

Thomas Nield.

Theoph. Ogden.

Edmd. Radcliffe.

Proved at Chester 15 Dec., 1731.

Sworn before

Roger Bolton, Surrogate.

1730. July 21.—Revd. John Halliwell, M.A., Curate of Oldham, Buried in the Chancel of Oldham Church.

1730 to 1732. JAMES SUGDEN, Curate.

Nov. 11.—Revd. James Sugden, Curate of Oldham, Nominated by the Rev Willm. Assheton, Rector of Prestwich, who promised to allow Mr. Sugden £40 per annum.

1732 to 1773. Jany. 3.—Revd. SAMUEL TOWNSON, Nominated & Appointed Curate of Oldham by Revd. Rd. Goodwin, Rector of Prestwich, who did allow him £40 for serving the said Cure.

The above records show that Mr. Sugden was appointed by the then Rector of Prestwich curate of Oldham at the passing rich stipend of £40 a year, and which excellent arrangement was confirmed by his successor, Richard Goodwin, when appointing Mr. Townson curate two years afterwards.

Samuel Townson is distinguished by having held the Oldham incumbency for a longer period than any of his predecessors, viz., 41 years. He married a Alice Yannis, of Crompton, and during the period of his ministry appears to have been assisted by Richard Hopwood, who signs himself assistant curate in the marriage register, and who appears to have lived in what were then known as the Parson Rooms.

I, Richard Hopwood, of Oldham, Clerk, do hereby promise to pay unto Margaret Radclyffe, of Foxdenton, Widow, the sum of one penny a year at the feast of St. Martin, yearly. For erecting a Stile, and making a footway into a Lane called Church Lane, in the Lease holding of the late John Chadwick, of Oldham, Innholder, or his assignes, for the use of such Tenants of the above said Richard Hopwood as dwell in the houses adjoining to Oldham Church Yard, and commonly called Parson Rooms, and the same to be paid during all such time as the said footway lieth open or is used by the said Richard Hopwood or his assigns.

1773 to 1818. THOMAS FAWCETT had been curate of S. Peter's Chapel and master of the Oldham Grammar School, and on the death of Mr. Townson was preferred to Oldham Church, the living, as it is now called, having been augmented by the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty. Mr. Fawcett's incumbency is the longest at present on record, viz., 45 years, was held during the stirring times of the Peninsular wars in the nation, and the development of the Evangelical movement in the

Church. With Mr. Fawcett we are actually in touch with our predecessors, as the present writer has talked with a member of the present congregation who can recall his father's description of Mr. Fawcett's sermons upon great national events like the Duke of Wellington's successes in the Pyrenees and the battle of Waterloo.

1818 to 1842. JOHN FALLOWFIELD, Incumbent, will be remembered as the last incumbent to have ministered in the old parochial chapelry, as it was during his cure that the old church was demolished, and the present erected by a special Act of Parliament.

1842 to 1861. THOMAS LOWE, Incumbent. Like his predecessor, Mr. Lowe was incumbent for nearly twenty years, but during part of this time he was non-resident.

Of the next four incumbents two are living, viz., Mr. Alexander and Mr. Walters, now Archdeacon of Worcester.

It has been said that all true history must be written at a distance, therefore we refrain from making any record of those so near to our own ministry, except to say how much the present incumbent's work has been made easier in many parts by the labours of those who have gone before him.

SPECIAL SERVICES IN THE CHAPELRY.

Besides the ordinary services of public worship and administration of sacraments, the Church of England is the appointed voice for national events, and so we record some of those observed in the passing years as well as some that are local and exceptional in Church order.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA.

1588. September 24th.—The Earl of Derby writes to Sir John Byron, Knt., one of my Deputy Lieutenants for Lancashire. That a Thanksgiving be held for the defeat of the Spanish Armada. "I have thought it expedient in respect of Christian duty we should fall to some godly exercise of thanksgiving for the same by prayer and preaching. Willing you so to commend the business to the Clergy of your hundred in their several charges, as our God by mutual consent may be praised therefor. And this is not to be omitted or delayed in any wise, but to be put in Execution at or before the next Sabbath."

On March 28th, 1655, a fast was observed at Oldham on account of the smallpox. This is interesting as showing how the Puritans held to certain Church discipline long after they had rejected Church order. This was the year when the use of the Prayer Book was inhibited.

LIST OF SPECIAL FORMS OF PRAYER FOUND IN
OLDHAM CHURCH CHEST.

1665. April 5.—A form of common prayer to be used on Wednesday, the 5th of April, being the day of the general fast appointed by His Majestie's proclamation for imploring God's blessing on His Majestie's naval forces.—*Charles II.*
1683. July 27.—His Majestie's declaration to all his loving subjects concerning the treasonable conspiracy against his sacred person and Government, appointed to be read in all churches and chappels within this kingdom.
1683. Sep. 9.—A form of prayer, with thanksgiving, to be used on Sunday, September the 9th, being the day of thanksgiving appointed by the King's declaration to be solemnly observ'd in all churches and chappels within this kingdom, in due acknowledgment of God's wonderful providence and mercy in discovering and defeating the late treasonable conspiracy against his sacred Majestie's person and Government.
1689. Mar. 12.—A form of prayer to be used on Wednesday, the twelfth day of March next ensuing, throughout the whole kingdom, being the fast day appointed by the King and Queen's proclamation. To be observed in a most solemn and devout manner, for supplicating Almighty God for the pardon of our sins, and for imploring His blessing and protection in the preservation of His Majestie's sacred person, and the prosperity of his arms in Ireland, and the naval forces.—*William and Mary.*

1693. Nov. 12 and 26.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God, to be used throughout the cities of London and Westminster, and elsewhere within the weekly bills of mortality, on Sunday the 12th day of this instant November, and in all other places throughout the kingdom of England, dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, on Sunday, the 26th day of this instant November, for the preservation of His Majesty from the great and manifold dangers to which his royal person was exposed during his late expedition, and for his safe return to his people.
1695. April 16.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God for discovering and disappointing a horrid and barbarous conspiracy of Papists and other trayterous persons to assassinate and murder his most gracious Majestie's royal person ; and for delivering his kingdom from an invasion intended by the French.
1695. June 19.—A form of prayer to be used throughout the whole kingdom, on Wednesday, the nineteenth day of June next, being the fast day appointed by proclamation, to be observed in a most solemn and devout manner, for supplicating Almighty God for the pardon of our sins, and for imploring His blessing and protection in the preservation of his Majestie's sacred person, and the prosperity of his arms both at land and sea.

By order of the Lord Justices.

1695. Sep. 8th.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving for granting to the forces of his Majesty, and his allies, so great success in taking the town and castle of Namur ; and for protecting his Majestie's sacred person from the many dangers to which he was so frequently exposed during that siege.

By order of the Lord Justices,

- 1697.—A form of prayer to be used next after the prayer "In the time of war and tumults," throughout the kingdom of England, dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, in all churches and chapels, at Morning and Evening Prayer, as often as there is Divine Service, during the time of his Majesty's absence.
1697. April 28.—A form of prayer to be used for the imploring a blessing from Almighty God upon his Majesty and all his dominions, and for the averting of those judgments which our manifold sins and provocations have most justly deserved.
1697. Dec. 2.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God for his Majestie's safe return, and for the happy and honourable peace of which God has made him the glorious instrument. To be used on Thursday, the second of December next, throughout the whole kingdom.
1699. April 5.—A form of prayer to be used that God would in His great mercy and goodness relieve and comfort such as suffer abroad for the Protestant religion.

1702. June 10.—A form of prayer to be used in all churches and chapels throughout the kingdom of England, dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for the imploring of a blessing from Almighty God upon her Majesty and her allies, engaged in the present war against France and Spain.—*Queen Anne.*
1703. Jan. 19.—A form of prayer to be used in all churches and chapels throughout the kingdom of England for the imploring of a blessing from Almighty God upon her Majesty and her allies, engaged in the present war ; as also for the humbling of ourselves before Him in a deep sense of His heavy displeasure shewed forth in the late dreadful storm and tempest ; and in order to the obtaining the pardon of our crying sins, the averting of his judgments, and the continuance of His mercies, and in a most special manner, that of the Protestant religion, to us and to our posterity.
1704. March 8.—A form of prayer, with thanksgiving, to Almighty God, to be used in all churches and chapels within this realm, every year, upon the 8th day of March, being the day on which her Majesty began her happy reign.—*Queen Anne.*
1704. Sep. 7.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving for the late glorious victory obtained over the French and Bavarians at Blenheim, near Hochstet, on Wednesday, the second of August, by the forces of her Majesty and her allies, under the command of the Duke of Marlborough.
1705. April 4.—A form of prayer to be used in all churches and chapels throughout the kingdom of England, dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for imploring the continuance of a blessing from Almighty God upon her Majesty and her allies, engaged in the present war ; and for restoring and perpetuating peace, safety to us and our kingdoms, and the nations and states in alliance with us ; and disappointing the boundless ambition of France.
1705. Aug. 23.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving for the late glorious success in forcing the enemies' lines in the Spanish Netherlands, by the arms of her Majesty and her allies, under the command of the Duke of Marlborough.
1706. March 20.—A form of prayer to be used in all churches and chapels for imploring the continuance of God's blessing and assistance on the arms of her Majesty and her allies engaged in the present war ; and for restoring and perpetuating peace, safety, and prosperity to her and her kingdoms, and the nations and states in alliance with her.
1707. May 1.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to be used on Thursday, the first day of May next, throughout England, the dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for rendering most hearty thanks to Almighty God for the wonderful and happy conclusion of the treaty for the union of her Majesty's two kingdoms of England and Scotland ; for imploring His blessings

on the United Kingdom, and on the arms of her Majesty and her allies, and her and their forces both by sea and land, in the just war in which they are now engaged ; for disappointing the boundless ambition of France ; and for beseeching Him to give all her Majesty's subjects hearts disposed to become one people.

1708. Feb. 17.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving for blessing the arms of her Majesty and her allies under the command of the Duke of Marlborough with many and great successes throughout the last campaign, happily finished by the taking of the strong city and fortress of Lisle, and the reduction of Ghent and Bruges.
1708. Aug. 19.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving for rendring most hearty thanks to Almighty God for the happy success of her Majesty's councils and forces against the late insolent and unjust attempt of the common enemy and Pretender to invade her Majesty's kingdom of Great Britain ; as also for the late great victory obtained over the French army near Audenarde.
1709. Nov. 22.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving for the common safety of her realms and the liberties of Europe by giving to her arms, in conjunction with those of her allies, under the command of the Duke of Marlborough, Captain-General of her forces, a signal and glorious victory at Blaregnies, near Mons, in Hainault.
1710. Nov. 7.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving for the safety of our realms and of the liberties of Europe, by giving to our arms, in conjunction with those of our allies, a wonderful course of successes in this campaign, and, more particularly, a signal and glorious victory in Spain.
1713. June 16.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God, to be used on Tuesday, the sixteenth day of June next, throughout England, Wales, and the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for the conclusion of a just and honorable peace between her most excellent Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and the French King.
1714. Jan. 20.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God, to be used throughout England, Wales, and the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, on Thursday, the twentieth day of January next (*viz.*, 1715), for bringing his Majesty to a peaceable and quiet possession of the throne, and thereby disappointing the designs of the Pretender and all his adherents.—*Accession of George I.*
1716. June 17.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving for the blessing of God upon his Majesty's councils and arms in suppressing the late unnatural rebellion.
1723. Ap. 25.—A form of prayer, with thanksgiving, to God, to be used in all churches and chapels throughout England and Wales, and the town of Berwick upon-Tweed, on Thursday, the twenty-fifth day of April next, being the day appointed by his Majesty for a public thanksgiving to Almighty God for preserving his Majesty and his subjects from that dreadful plague with which the kingdom of France was lately visited, and for putting an end to the same.

1739. Jan. 9.—A form of prayer to be used in all churches and chapels throughout that part of Great Britain called England, dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, upon Wednesday, the ninth of January next, being the day appointed by proclamation for a general fast and humiliation before Almighty God, to be observed in a most devout and solemn manner.—*George II.*
1741. Nov. 25.—A form of prayer, &c., precisely similar to that of Jan. 9, 1739; 1744, Jan. 9; 1744, Ap. 11; 1745, Dec. 18; 1746, Jan. 7.
1746. May 4.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God, to be used at Morning and Evening Service, after the general thanksgiving, for the complete victory vouchsafed to his Majesty's forces, under the conduct of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, over the rebels in Scotland
1746. Oct. 9.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the suppression of the late unnatural rebellion, and deliverance of these kingdoms from the calamities of an intestine war.
1749. Ap. 25.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God, to be used in all churches and chapels throughout England, the dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for putting an end to the late bloody and expensive war, by the conclusion of a just and honourable peace.
1756. Feb. 6.—A form of prayer to be used in all churches and chapels throughout that part of Great Britain called England, the dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for imploring a blessing from Almighty God upon his Majesty's fleets and armies in the present important situation of publick affairs; as also for the humbling of ourselves before Him in a deep sense of His late visitation by a most dreadful and extensive earthquake, more particularly felt in some neighbouring countries in alliance and friendship with us, and in some degree by ourselves; and in order to the obtaining the pardon of our crying vices, to the averting of His judgments, and for the continuance of His mercy, in the support of the Protestant religion and our liberties, in the prosperity of our country, and in the welfare of the King and the Royal Family.
1757. Feb. 11.—A form of prayer, &c., precisely similar to that of Jan. 9, 1739; 1758, Feb. 17; 1759, Feb. 16.
1759. Feb. 18.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the ceasing of the distemper which lately raged amongst the horned cattle in this kingdom.
1759. Oct. 21.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God, to be used at Morning and Evening Service after the general thanksgiving, throughout the cities of London and Westminster, and elsewhere within the bills of mortality, on Sunday, the twenty-first day of October, 1759; and in all churches and chapels throughout England, Wales, and the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, *on the Sunday after the ministers thereof receive the same; for*

the defeat of the French army in Canada, and the taking of Quebec by his Majesty's forces, and for the other successes and blessings of the year.

1759. Nov. 29.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God for vouchsafing such signal successes to his Majesty's arms, both by sea and land, particularly by the defeat of the French army in Canada and the taking of Quebec; and for most seasonably granting us at this time an uncommonly plentiful harvest.
1759. Dec. 9.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the victory gained by his Majesty's fleet under the command of Sir Edward Hawke, on the twentieth of November last.
1760. Oct. 12.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving on occasion of the late successes of his Majesty's arms in North America, and the surrender of Montreal and all Canada.
1761. July 26.—A form of prayer, &c., on the surrender of Pondicherry and the islands of Belleisle and Dominica, and the late glorious success of his Majesty's arms in Germany.—*George III.*
1762. March 28.—A form, &c., on the wonderful success of his Majesty's army and fleet employed against the island of Martinico.
1762. Aug. 15.—A form, &c., on the safe delivery of the Queen and happy birth of a young prince.
1762. Oct. 3.—A form, &c., on the important success of his Majesty's arms against the Havannah.
1763. May 5.—A form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God for putting an end to the late bloody and expensive war by the conclusion of a just and honourable peace.

Copy of the Proclamation by the King.

A Proclamation for a Publick Thanksgiving,
GEORGE R.

WHEREAS it has pleased Almighty God, in His great goodness, to put an end to the late bloody and expensive war in which we were engaged against his Most Christian Majesty the French King and his Catholic Majesty the King of Spain by the conclusion of a just and honourable peace between us and his said Most Christian Majesty the French King and his Catholic Majesty upon such a foundation as, by the blessing of God, may prove effectual to procure a firm and lasting tranquility to us and our subjects. We, therefore, adoring the Divine goodness, and duly considering that such great and publick blessings do call for public and solemn acknowledgment, have thought fit, by the advice of our Privy Council, to issue this our Royal Proclamation hereby appointing and commanding that a general thanksgiving to Almighty God for these His mercies be observed throughout England, Wales, and the

town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, on Thursday, the fifth day of May next. And for the better and more orderly solemnizing the same. we have given directions to the Most Reverend the Archbishops and the Right Reverend the Bishops of England to compose a form of prayer suitable to this occasion, to be used in all churches and chapels and other places of publick worship, and to take care for the timely dispensing of the same throughout their respective dioceses; and we do strictly charge and command that the said publick day of thanksgiving be religiously observed by all our loving subjects as they tender the favour of Almighty God, and upon pain of suffering such punishment as we can justly inflict upon all such as shall contemn or neglect the same.

Given at our Court at St. James's, the thirtieth day of March, 1763, in the third year of our reign.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

LONDON :

Printed by Mark Baskett, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty; and by the Assigns of Robert Baskett. 1763.

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1765. Aug. 25.—A form, &c. (title similar to that of Oct. 12, 1760), on the safe delivery of the Queen and happy birth of a Prince
1766. Oct. 5.—A form, &c. (similar to preceding), a Princess
1767. Nov. 8.—A form, &c. (similar to preceding), a Prince.
1768. Nov. 13.—A form, &c. (similar to preceding), a Princess.
1770. May 27.—A form, &c. (similar to preceding), a Princess.
1771. June 9.—A form, &c. (similar to preceding), a Prince.
1781. Feb. 21.—A form, &c., precisely similar to that of Jan. 9, 1739.
1728. Forms of prayer, with thanksgiving to Almighty God, to be used in all churches and chapels within this realm every year upon
- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|----------------------------|
| The fifth day of November | ... | Gunpowder Treason. |
| The thirtieth day of January | ... | King Charles the Martyr. |
| The twenty-ninth day of May | ... | Restoration, May 29, 1660. |

All these titles are copied from the originals in the chest in Oldham Church.

It will be observed the above are prayers ordered by the King or Queen in council with the Archbishops for special occasions, and covering the period between 1665 and 1781, and so embracing the reigns of their Majesties King Charles II., James II., William and Mary, Queen Anne, George I., George II., and George III., and are

interesting because of their quaint and unreserved terms and direct reference to important events in the national life.

ECCLESIASTICAL OFFENCES.

A PRESENTMENT PAPER FOR THE PARISH OF OLDHAM, 1684.

The following interesting relic of the discipline of the Church is taken from the various papers which have been preserved by successive vicars. It may not seem to everyone a desirable thing that this discipline should be revived, but there can be no doubt that the absence of all Church discipline of this character is much to be deplored, and is chargeable with a fair share of the irregularities and vices which go unrebuked, and therefore unchecked.

The original, which is in Latin, we append a translation.

John, by Divine Providence Archbishop of York, Primate of England, and Metropolitan, to all and singular clerks and literates whatsoever, wheresoever appointed throughout the province of York greeting: —We charge you that ye cite, or one of you cite peremptorily, all and singular, whose names and surnames are written below, by (these) presents, personally, if they can be so cited, otherwise by public proclamation of the citation, by fixing the presents on the doors and over the entrances of your parish churches and chapels, and by leaving them for some time in the same place and furthermore by showing them in the presence of acquaintances, friends, neighbours and their households, and by other lawful ways and methods, by which you can of right. So that our citation by these means may in all probability reach respectively to the knowledge of the (parties) themselves, that they may appear, and every one of them may appear before us or our deputies or deputy, him or them whomsoever, in the Parish Church of Manchester on Thursday the eighteenth (?) day of the month of September between the hours (of) nine and eleven before noon of the same day. To answer certain Articles, Summaries or Interrogatories concerning the very health of their souls and Reformation of their morals, and especially the offences, crimes, and excesses discovered and revealed in our Metropolitan Visitation lately (and) lawfully held, and described below, to be canonically objected of our mere duty against them and every of them, when they shall have come, and to be personally ministered (according as they concern them conjointly and severally), and further to do and receive what shall be just in this respect.

And what ye shall have done in the premises, ye shall on the said day, hour, and place, together with the presents, duly certify us or our deputy or deputies whomsoever.

Given under the seal of our Consistory Court at York where we reside the fourteenth day of the month of August, in the year of Our Lord One Thousand, Six Hundred (and) Eighty Four.

Sep. 14.—A Presentment of divers persons for offences committed against the Laws Ecclesiastical; following are the names and what they were charged with:—

James Jackson, of Pitt, for not coming to prayers till the latter end of Divine Service.

Thomas Tetlow, sen., and John Lees, of Lowside, for Sitting in the Church, with their hatts on, in Sermon time.

James Sykes and Elizabeth his Wife, Isaac Wild, senr., and his wife, Isaac Wild and his wife, Sarah Wild Spinter, wife of John Lees, James Wild, and Suzanna Boydall, for not coming to Church nor receiving the Sacrament.

James Twedall and Jane Crompton for ffornication together.

Abraham Wild and Hester Shaw for the like.

Thomas Bradley and Sarah Whittaker, for the like.

Radcliffe Chadderton and Sarah Jackson, for the like.

Abraham Ogden and Annam Scholes, for the like.

John Newton, of Heyside, for Standing Excommunicate.

James Buerdsell and Robert Mayall, for Loytering in the Church yard in time of Divine Service.

John Bagaley, James Sykes, Thomas Lees, and John Atkinson, for not paying of their Church layes.

Henry Tetlow, of Thailemoor, for not Baptizing of his Children.

Wife of Johnis Scholfeild of Oldham, Wife of James Bury, of Hopkinfold, Wife of Willim Wright of Hollins, Wife of James Buckley of Greenhill, Wife of James Cocker of Sholver, Wife of Robert Leech of Broadhey Lane, Wife of James Platt of Near Watterhead Mill, and Wife of James Taylor of Lowside, for not returning Thanks after Safe Delivery from Child Birth.

Isaac Wild, senr., for interring Mary Sale, att the Quakers burying place.

James Jackson, of Oldham, for Committing fornication with Alice Milne, lately deceased.

James Goodard, John Bagaley, James Sykes, and John Atkinson, for not paying of their Church Layes.

Jonathan Milne and Sara Holt, for Suspicion of Adultery together.

Oldham, 14 Sept., 1684.

Published then according to order,

By me, ISAAC HARPUR, Curate.

Among the Oldham Church records there is preserved an interesting old book, bound in white parchment, which also gives the names and offences of those excommunicated and those restored to communion from 1700 to 1767.

“ A true Register of the Excommunication that shall be issued out against any persons within the parish of Oldham from the 22 day of Feby., 1700, and when they are taken off.

“Mch. 2, 1700.—Mary Sandiforth was then restored to communion with the Church having performed her penance.

“Oct. 10, 1703, were those persons following excommunicated :—

Thomas Greaves and Alice Cheetham.

Mary Buckley.

John Whitehead, of Nether Lees, in Assheton-under-Line, & Anne the wife of Thomas Traverse, of Chadderton.

“The following persons were declared in Parish Church of Oldham Nov. 6th, 1737 :—

Alice Whitehead.

Annie Winterbottom.

Mathew Burton.

Mary Mayol, of Salford.

Sarah Howorth.

John Jackson.

Sarah Henthorn.

Robert Widson, of
Macclesfield.

Thomas Bradley, of Sholver, a soldier.

Sarah Goddard.

James Widdall.

Joseph Suttlyffe and Mary his wife.

“Also Nov. 25, 1739.—Robert Hopwood, of Chadderton, was presented for defamation, and afterwards was declared excommunicate for contempt of court.

“Also June 24, 1750.—Sarah Fitton, Glodwick; Betty Heap, of Dollstyle; Jane Bradley and John Buckley, of Sholver; Samuel Hardey and Anne his wife, of Priest-hill; Ann Bently and Mary Bently, of Tithbarne fold; Peter Lees; Martha Needham, of Hollins; Isaac Wilde and Anne Marlor, of Bardsley brow; Samuel Hardey, Hannah Whitehead, Betty Needham, Susanna Marsland, Elizabeth Widdall, Anne Thorp, Susan Heywood, Benjamin Bramley, Grace Coates, of Hilltop; Francis Platt and Betty Heap; Mary Clegg; Joseph Cheetham, of Crompton; James Low and Margaret his wife; Jonathan Wilde, Anne Lees, Joseph Mills, Mary Newton, of Glodwick; James Ogden, of Royton; Sarah Collinge and Timothy Buckley, Isabel Sankey, Abigail Needham, John Brierly, and Betty Buckley, of Watermill.

“The following persons were Restored to the Communion of the Faithfull in Christ :—

July 22, 1750,	Timothy Buckley.
Aug. 5, „	Peter Lees, of Spring.
Oct. 7, „	Mary Newton.
„	Sarah Collinge.
Oct. 21, „	Anne Bently.
	Annie Marlow.
	John Buckley.
	Jane Bradley.

“Oct. 21, 1750.—Francis Platt, Martha and Abigall Needham, Annie Lees, Betty Knott, James Ogden.

“The following persons were declared excommunicate in the Parish Church of Oldham for their manifest contempt to the Law and the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction on Sunday, the 18th day of Sept., 1757 :—

Anne Taylor.	James Newton.
James Cliff.	Mary Cheetham.
John Ogden, of Morside.	Abram Mills, of Maygate side.
Benjamin Marsland,	Abigail Needham.
of Littletown.	
John Holden, of Sholver.	Thomas Travis, of Bent brow.
James Wolfenden.	Alice Simister.
Anne Taylor.	

“Also on 4th day of October, 1761 :—

Richard Cropper.	John Usherwood.
Susan Newton.	John Wallworth.
Betty Scholes.	Abraham Clegg.
John Wilde, of Fields.	Benjamin Broadbent(weaver)
Mary Buckley, of Quickedge.	James Lees.

“The following persons were Restored to the Communion in the Faithfull in Christ :—

Oct. 23, 1757,	John Ogden, of Moss Side.
Nov. 16, 1760,	Thomas Travis.
Nov. 1, 1761,	James Clegg.
Nov. 15, 1761,	James Lees.
Feby. 1, 1767,	Alice Scholes (late Simister).”

MUSICAL SERVICES.

*1696-7. THE OLDHAM SINGERS.—Elias Hall, in his account of the singing in Oldham Church during the Incumbency of the Rev. R. Sugden, who greatly encouraged the singing, remarks that it was finally settled that those who had learnt singing with him should sing every Sunday in the Church. The only tune sung “for the benefit of the congregation” for a considerable time was the “Isle of Providence,” alias “St. David’s,” both in the morning and the afternoon, but by degrees others were introduced. The double tunes for the night agreed with the Psalms for the day, unless the *Te Deum*, or *Veni Creator*, &c., were sung. The singers stood as near the clock as they conveniently could, but during the time James Brierley was churchwarden, “he being a lover of music,” he raised a seat higher near the clock for the convenience of eight singers, but as it was before common to all, they could not without disturbance keep it, and they had to give up that position. The fame of the Oldham singers had, however, gone abroad, for we are told “that Mr. Pigott, rector of Brindle and vicar of Rochdale, having heard us sing, and rejoicing at the improvement thereof, had the occasion to come to Oldham to celebrate the marriage of Mr. Horton’s daughter, and to wet our industry he brought us a tune in 4 parts to the 48th Psalm, the highest part being the same with our old tune, only eight notes higher; we were obliged to learn all 4 parts and to go to sing them at Rochdale. Now, having learned them, 20 of us went and sent for him to the Royal Oak. He came and brought the printed book, out of which he had taken it, and desired us to revise what we had pricked and correct mistakes, if we found any, after which we sung it before him there, before we went into the church (for it was Sunday), with the which he was highly pleased, and when we sung it in the church, in time of divine service, lest any other voice should obstruct the harmony, he would not suffer the clerk to name the Psalm. At night we had a bountiful treat at the cost of him and the churchwardens, and he gave us four books of vocal music. We likewise went to Manchester to sing to the organ, but then we had our master with us.”

NEWTON CHAPEL.—The Chorusses will be as full as possible with Kettle-Drums, Trumpets, &c. The Chorusses of Youths and Virgins will be performed in Character accompanied with French Horns & Flutes. Doors open at 10, to begin at 11.

1769. July 31.—Handel’s Oratorio, “The Messiah,” performed in Prestwich Parish Church, For the Benefit of Adam Eckersall, John Shuttleworth, Henry Eckersall, and Thomas Lees. The Songs by the principal Singers of Prestwich, Oldham, Hey, Shaw, &c. Harpsichord by Mr. Crompton, Organist, of Bury. First Violin by Mr. Wainwright. Instrumentalists best hands from Manchester & adjacent parts. Choruss accompanied with Kettle Drums, Trumpets, Double Basses, &c. Conducted by Mr. Wainwright. Doors open at 3, begin at 4 precisely. Tickets 2/- each for the New Gallery and Chancel, 1/- each the Body of the Church.

* Shaw’s Oldham Annals.

The above accounts are interesting as showing how public worship was conducted in the latter part of the 17th and the whole of the 18th centuries, and as we read them we cannot help realising how far the spirit of Calvinism and Puritanism carried the Church away from the sober and reverent spirit of the Book of Common Prayer.

We shiver as we read of "the only tune sung for the benefit of the congregation," and find it difficult to discover anything which suggests the worship of Almighty God. Whilst "the chorusses of youths and virgins, performed in character," "the doors opened at 3, to begin at 4 precisely, Tickets 2/- each for the new gallery and chancel," suggest more easily the theatre than the sanctuary of holiness.

THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

1656. The Act for the Observance of the Lord's Day passed.—This Act forms a striking contrast to the "Book of Sports" first issued by James I. in 1618 and republished by Charles I. in 1633. It directs all goods cried or put o' sale on the Lord's Day, or other days of humiliation or thanksgiving, to be seized; Travellers, waggoners, &c., not observing the days to forfeit 10s. Any writ, warrant, &c., executed on those days to be of no effect, and the persons so offending to forfeit £5; No person to use or travel with boat, horse, coach, or sedan, except to Church, upon pain of 10s.; All persons which in those days shall be in a tavern, ale-house, tobacco-house (unless he lodge there), to forfeit 10s.; All persons dancing or profanely singing to forfeit 10s.; and where no distress can be made on the goods of offenders, owing to their poverty, the offender to sit in the stocks for six hours.

A clause in the Act requires the Churchwardens and other Officers in every Parish to procure one or more copies to be kept in their respective parishes. And the Ministers are enjoined in every year, i.e., upon the first Lord's Day in March yearly, immediately before morning sermon, to read it, or cause it to be read.

In Booker's History of Prestwich, p. 22, the Churchwardens Accord record:—

1658.—Pd. for an acte for the observance of the
Sabbath day 00 : 00 : 06

REGISTER OF PREACHERS.

There is preserved at Oldham Church an old M.S. book, bound in white parchment, in which is recorded a list of visiting clergy who preached between 1665 and 1732.

The Names of Strangers who have preacht at Oldham since Easter, 1665 :—

Palm Sunday.	Isaac Harper.
Trin. Sun.	Hugh Pollett, M.A., an Essex man.
1 Sun. after	Jno. Lawton, Newton chap :
2 " "	Jno. Sandiforth, Vicar of Glossop.
5 of Ap. Fast Day.	Jno. Walworke.
Thanksgiving Day	Edw: Kenyon, Rectr. of Prestwich, B.D.
5 Sun. aftr.	Mr. Cheatham, a Norfolk minister,
Trinity.	Mr. of Arts.
S. James' Day.	Jno. Hide, Yorkshyre man, A.M.
Oct. 8.	Edmund Lees, Mr. of Arts.
Dec. 5.	" "
Dec. 31.	Thomas Saulb, A.B.
Jay. 3, 1666.	"
7.	"
Feb. 18.	Thomas Mawdsley, cur: de Holmfirth.
	Devereux Spencer, Magister Artium,
	paroch de Shodwell, Stafford.
Mch. 29.	Thomas Saulb, Artium Bacr.
31.	"
Ap. 5.	Jo. Sandiforth, Vic. de Glossop.
May 9.	Adam Robinson, Coll. de Brazen enos,
	Oxon, Artium Bacr.
20.	L. Fogge, in Theologia Bacr:
27.	Abraham Kenion, Oxon, Bacr. Artm.
June 10.	Zacharias Hardman, Art. Bacr., Oxon.
24.	Samuel Hanmer de Ringley, Curate.
July 8.	Thom. Hutchinson, Oxon, Artium
	Magister.

July 16, 1666.	Tho. Bwooker, Oxon, Bacr. Artm.
22.	Zach. Hardman, Artm. Bacr., ex Academia Oxoniensi.
Aug. 6.	George Bwooker.
19.	Isaac Harpur, Artm. Bacr., Acad. Camb.
Oct. 21.	Robt. Bolton, Art. Bacr., Camb.
May 26.	Thomas Parren, Art. Bacr., Oxoniensis.
Dec. 8.	Adam Robinson, Art. Mag., Oxon.
15, 1667.	Jno. Birchnell, Mr. of Arts, Fellow of Manchester.
Jan. 5, 1667.	John Hyde, A.B.
12.	Joh. Beresford, A.M., Cantabrigiensis.
26.	Samuel Preend, Artium Magister.
Feb. 9.	Adam Robinson, Art. Mag., Oxon.
16.	Harold Boswistle, A.M., Camb.
	W. Whittle, A.B., Oxon.
Mch. 22.	R. Broome, A.B., Camb.
Aug. 1.	Jo. Lees, A.B., Camb.
Dec. 4, 1668.	Richard Boardman, A.B., Trin. Coll., Camb.
May 9.	William Camelcombe.
Jan. 13, 1669.	Saville Bradley, Art. Mag., Oxon.
Dec. 5,	Robert Browne, A.M., one of the chaplains of Christ Coll. in Manchester.
	R. Harrison, Art. Bac., Oxon.
June 2, 1671.	Jac. Scholefield, A.B., Oxon.
18,	Tho. Lawton, Newton Heath.
July 23.	Robt. Browne, A.M., Mancund.
Aug. 6.	James Butterworth.
20.	Joseph Whittle, Art. Bacc., Oxon.
27.	Jacob Wolfenden, Coll. Eman., Camb., Socius.
	Ja. Schofield, Art. Bac.
June 8, 1707.	Henry Pigott, B.D., Vicar of Rochdale, & Rector of Brindle, in the County of Lancaster.
Nov. 5, 1732.	Mr. Purnol, Minister of Unsworth, in ye parsh of Prestwich.

THE PARISH CLERKS WHO HAVE SERVED OLDHAM
CHURCH.

1592	Edmund Langley.
1604	Raffe Tetlow.
1633	Richard Whittaker.
1660 to 1679	Henry Whittaker.
1679 to 1722	John Wylde.
1722 to 1734	Thomas Neild.
1734 to 1741	Thomas Neild, junr.
1741 to 1744	Samuel Milne.
1744 to 1782	John Neild.
1782 to 1801	Ralph Jackson.
1801 to 1815	Jonathan Jackson.
1815 to 1834	Ralph Jackson.
1834 to 1874	Abraham Jackson.
1874 to 1885	James Jackson.
1885 to 1906	Thomas Stubbs.

*1592. Nov. 24.—Will of EDMUND LANGLEY, of Oldham (Parish), Clerk to be buried in the Church yard of Oldham, near to the steeple side, to Robert Langley my younger son my howsing and grounds by the lawful favour of my good Master and Landlord, and I beseech my right worshipful Master, Mr. Assheton, of Chaderton, and Mr. Hunte, Mynister, and all the residue of the gentlemen of the parish, that my said son Robert may also supply the office, and enjoy the benefit of the Clerkship.

Edmund Langley is the first parish clerk of whom we can find any record, and he probably had held the office some time before the date of his will; but whether his request that his son Robert should succeed him was granted we do not know. At all events, in 1604 we find the office held by Raffe Tetlow, who, if he held it until Richard Whittaker succeeded him in 1633, occupied it for a long period. The registers in this earlier period do not help us, as it was not until a latter time that either the clergy or the clerks signed the registers.

* Shaw's Oldham Annals.

1660-79. HENRY WHITTAKER.

1671. The Church Registers had been badly attended to for some considerable time, in fact, years, were omitted, which occasioned the following note to be recorded in the Registers :—

This discontinuance in the Register was made by the careless or wilfull neglect of Henry Whittaker, then Clerk of the Parochial Chapel of Oldham, for which, as soon as it was discovered, he was turned out of his place by

JO. LAKE, D.D.,

Rector of Prestwich-cum-Oldham.

The principal omissions are from 1669 to 1679, though there are some few entries of special families ; so no return of the number of Births, Marriages, and Deaths can be recorded for this period.

Whittaker, we may infer, was a relation of his predecessor, for, as the above list discloses, it is an office which runs strongly in families. He will always be distinguished as the clerk Bishop Lake dismissed for neglect of duty.

1722. May 27.—JOHN WYLD, Clerk, of Oldham, was Buried at Oldham.

At the west end of Oldham Church there is a grave stone with the following inscription :—

Here resteth the Body of John Wylde, of Oldham, who was late Parish Clerk 42 years, & was buried the 27th day of May, A.D. 1722, In the 77th Year of his Age.

John Wild, or Wylde, who was Henry Whittaker's successor, held the office for the longest period yet recorded, and was in turn succeeded by Thomas Neild, who retained the office for twelve years, and was then followed by his son Thomas.

May 27.—THOMAS NEILD, of Bent yate, Entered the Clerkship of Oldham.

The three Neilds, with a short interregnum, held the office over a period of 60 years, and, if we may judge by the following, were not confined strictly to their parochial duties.

1763. June 21.—The Manchester Mercury contains this singular advertisement :—

Wanted, in the Town of Oldham, A Currier and Leather Cutter, there being many Shoemakers in that Town, and also about Lees and Saddleworth, and no Currier nearer than Manchester, Rochdale, and Ashton. Any person who is willing to supply the Place and reside there may have a convenient House and Shop immediately. For further Particulars, Enquire of the Parish Clerk of Oldham aforesaid.

RALPH JACKSON in 1782 begun a service of parish clerkship which remained with that family for 103 years, 40 of which years were filled by the services of the well-known Oldham character, Abraham Jackson.

In the above record of the clergy who have served Oldham Church in various capacities we have, as in the case of the Fabric, to begin with probabilities when we retrace our history beyond the 15th century.

But as we have already observed, quite early in the 15th century (1411) we are in possession of distinct evidence of a priest in charge of Oldham in the person of Thomas-le-Wylde.

In the middle ages there were many things which would militate against a chapelry like Oldham having a permanent resident priest. One was the great disparity between rectors and curates in those days. The rector was a priest in full possession of all the emoluments of the parish, including the tithe, and the vicar or curate-in-charge was only the substitute of the rector, and did not receive the tithe.

Again, under certain provisions, foreigners were sometimes appointed to English benefices, whilst others were allowed to hold two or more benefices in plurality.

Thus considering how many were the vacancies open to non-residence in the middle ages, it is probable that at least half the resident parish priests of the English in the 15th century were either vicars or curates-in-charge.

But it has always been the parish priest, the secular, as he was sometimes called to distinguish him from the monk (the regular), who was resident among his flock, living largely their life of simplicity and often of hardness, but knowing their temptations, ministering to their needs, who has done so much to form the particular strength of the Church of England, and to foster that predominate affection for her ministry which has always characterised her long history.

Canon Beeching, in a recent paper, "Religio Laici," says :—

"It must have struck every one who has read Chaucer's beautiful description of the parson in the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, that the picture in its essential lines might have been drawn from not a few parsons known to ourselves. The learning, the generosity, the activity in visiting, the patience in teaching, the general fatherliness with capacity for sharp rebuke upon occasion, are all characteristics as familiar to us as to Chaucer. And they are discoverable in every age, especially when some calamity befalls that brings the simple parish priest into the light of history. Such was Rowland Taylor, whose biography we owe, with that of not a few others, to the pen of the Martyrologist Fox, who, with all his partisan credulity, was a good judge of character; such was "the apostle of the north," Bernard Gilpin; such was George Herbert during his few years at Bemerton; such were Samuel Wesley of Epworth, and Fletcher of Madeley. These are conspicuous examples in the memory of every one, but they are no more than specimens of their class.

“And not only is the parochial ideal of duty a constant, or at least a perpetual recurring one, but we find from the earliest times evidence of characteristic preferences in the wider field of Church politics. One such constant characteristic is a strong apathy, becoming at intervals a strong antipathy, towards the Roman see, and a correspondingly strong sense of the necessary attachment between the English Church and State. In Saxon times the bishops and clergy had rank and duties in the body politic, independently of a place in their own ecclesiastical synods. All through mediæval times bishops were great officers of State; and even now the ordinary Englishman is pleased that they should have a seat in the Upper House of Parliament. As to the early existence of anti-papal feeling, Dr. Cutts points out that the canons sent by Boniface to Cuthbert, and considered by the Council of Clovesho (A.D. 747), were all passed, with the exception of the two preliminary canons formally acknowledging the supremacy of Rome. ‘The omissions,’ he adds, ‘are the most important part of the document.’ The anti-papal acts of the parliaments of Edward I., following upon the papal extortions under John and Henry III., are numerous; and those in Henry VIII.’s reign, although dictated by the king, were far from being unpopular. Another characteristic that we meet in Saxon days, and constantly afterwards, is a sense of the importance of reading the Scriptures and preaching, and the reasonableness of saying Divine service, if not in the mother tongue, yet so as it might be heard and followed by the congregation. Translations of Holy Scripture into English go back as far as King Alfred and the Venerable Bede. By canons of the synod of Clovesho already referred to, priests are instructed to be careful about explaining to their people the meaning of the Sacraments and the symbols used; to translate the words used in the prayers, and teach the Creed and Our Father; and to use simple plain-song for the service, or else read it distinctly. This insistence upon worshipping with the understanding as well as with the spirit has been first and last a typical trait of the English Church, and as characteristic of the clergy as of the laity.”

Again, the same writer, in showing how the clergy by their very unique position have always been the defenders, as a class, of the needs and the rights of the poor, says :—

“ To speak first of what to many has seemed a purely modern development, the interest taken of late years in the improvement of the social conditions under which the poorer classes live, whether in town or country. In regard to the towns, this is an endeavour to mitigate the new slavery that has followed in the wake of the industrial revolution of last century ; in the villages it has been part of the millennial effort to persuade the yeomen that the labourers are their brethren in Christ. Those who are interested in maintaining brutalizing conditions of labour, because they are found to be profitable, naturally view with dislike any interference on the part of the Church ; on the other side, it has sometimes been held, even by Churchmen, that in attempting to deal with economic problems, the Church has gone beyond her province. It is useful, therefore, to look back to the middle ages and see how, at a time when an exact faith was not undervalued, the clergy found time and opportunity for interest in the secular life of their people, and made themselves felt as champions of righteousness and mercy in an age-long conflict with the tyranny of feudalism. Bishop Hobhouse, in a most valuable preface contributed to the fourth volume of the Somerset Record Society's publications, has drawn out clearly the share taken by the Church in alleviating the lot of the serfs on the manorial estates : ‘ The religious conditions of the community stood in strong contrast to the civil. The spiritual authority was strong enough to control all orders and degrees of men in their mutual relations. The Church regulated the festal and work days. It claimed for the servile population to be free from the demands of service on the days set apart as Holy Days of obligation. These days were not only the Lord's day and the great Christian feasts, but all the days of local observance, *e.g.* the dedication day of the Parish Church, the day of the

local Saint or of the principal guild-patron. On all these days the labourer, though born in serfdom, was free, only bound to the service of his Divine Master. He donned his best clothes, he joined his fellow guildsmen, he marched under banners to the Church as the common home of the highest and the lowest.

"After Divine service, there were amusements provided at the Church House, or on the village green. Somebody had given a tavern of ale (*i.e.* holy ale to be consumed), and invited the parishioners of the next parish; or there was a return revelry at the Church House of that parish, or the guild of Webbers and Hogglers was holding its 'ale,' or Robin Hood was mustering his men at the Butts, or the young men or the maidens were keeping Hockday. The bulk of the parishioners were, I conceive, engaged through their various associations in planning their amusements. They were not spectators or partakers merely, but also managers, sharing in the pageant and in the costs; and thereby the bonds of social fellowship were tightened, and the barrier lines between servile and free, which seem to the student of our law books to be so impassable, were melted away by the warmth of kindly fellowship. Certain it is that in these documents no trace is found of any class disfranchised by bondage from the even enjoyment of the privileges, spiritual or social, which attached to the religious community.

"If we glance at a manor court-roll of the day, the condition of the civil community as there seen stands in strong contrast to the condition of the religious community (the very same persons be it remembered) as shown in the Church accounts. In the civil document the community is divided into sharply defined classes, the lord of the soil and his tenant, the tenants into bond and free, the villeins again subdivided according to the size of their holdings. The relative duties of class to class are sharply defined too, and are involuntary. They are all enforceable and enforced by fine and penalty. But in spite of this harsh look there are traces to be seen of a gradual blending of classes and interests, and of a continual softening of the earlier barrier lines. . . .

“The great blending force is, I conceive, to be found in the Church, *not only in its master precepts of brotherly love and mercy, but in the peculiar form which it adopted of social action, a form which its lofty authority then enabled it to carry out.* It was able to mitigate the rigour of the landlord's demands upon the servant of the soil, whom serfdom would else have doomed to an unceasing round of labour. It was strong enough to say to the master, ‘Thy servant shall rest on the days that are marked as holy. Thou and thy servant together shall on those days resort to the house of your Divine Master, as his fellow servants, and there pay your united homage of prayer and praise.’ It was in this way that the Holy Day of the Church became the holiday of the people.

“It is a significant comment on the Bishop's words that when, in the time of Edward VI., the Church lay prostrate under the feet of the English landlords, one of their first complaints was of the number of holidays still left after Henry's reduction, and one of their first legislative acts to reduce them still further. Plainly, then, in mediæval times it was part of the everyday business of the parish clergyman in the name of the Church *deponere superbos de sede et exaltare humiles.* The Church in each parish was a branch of the great Christian Social Union.”

But when we have said all we can as to the parish priest's care for the social as well as the spiritual well-being of his flock, there is nothing which can compare with the vital value of his office as daily mediator before the throne of grace for the wants and needs of his flock.

This has been the unique power of the Church of England that for more than 1,000 years it has placed in every parish of our land a parish priest whose daily duty (not being otherwise reasonably hindered) it was to offer up the daily sacrifice of prayer and intercession on behalf of all souls committed to his care “and to cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begins,

that the people may come to hear God's word and to pray with him."

Each morn and eve the golden keys
Are lifted in the sacred hand,
To show the sinner on his knees
Where Heaven's bright doors wide open stand.

For however imperfect may have sometime been the personal qualities of the individual priest, no human frailties or limitations could diminish the efficacy of the daily sacerdotal intercession.

V.

THE REGISTERS.

The registers of Oldham Church are really the most valuable archives Oldham possesses, for they form the chief authentic source of all the antecedents and their conditions of those families which have had their place and influence in the town for succeeding generations, and posterity will always be indebted to those in authority at Oldham Church for the diligent care with which they have been kept and preserved for almost 350 years.

Mr. Giles Shaw has placed Oldham under much indebtedness by his industry in transcribing and editing the Oldham registers, and we only propose now to summarise their contents in a brief manner.

The following extracts by the "Rev." J. Godson are illustrated in many cases by our own registers :—

The year 1558 is a date beyond which few Church registers go, and but few commence at this early date, though Thomas Cromwell, with Henry VIII.'s authority, in 1538 enjoined that every parson, vicar, or curate for every church keep one book or register for recording the date of every wedding, christening, and burial made in his parish. Both its novelty and difficulty operated against the injunction being universally obeyed. It was a bothering and difficult business, because the book was to be kept safe under locks and keys, in a sure coffer, provided at charge of the parish, and taken forth in the presence of the wardens for the entries to be made. In Edward VI.'s reign (1547) the order for keeping parish registers had to be renewed. In Queen Elizabeth's reign every minister had to declare at his institution, "I shall keep the register book according to the Queen's injunction." In 1597 Convocation took the matter up, not only to enforce it universally in the two provinces, but to change the register from a paper to a parchment book. Hence many of the oldest books are evidently fair copies of the original entries; the beauty and uniform character of the writing (as much as the order of Convocation) is sufficient to show this.

Oliver Cromwell's time makes a general break in the keeping of registers by the clergy, and occasioned a great loss of the old books. A civil registrar was to be appointed by every parish. He was to have the old books delivered up to him. This order or ordinance of Parliament was not generally complied with, and in many cases upon the return of the King, when the old order of things began again, the clergy who retained them had died or gone away, and they never got back to their proper place.

The nearly general custom of registration, owing to the universal commotion occasioned by the civil war, and also the displacement on a large scale of the old clergy and the introduction into the Church of a new state of things, made fresh legislative direction needful if registering was to be continued. The Book of Common Prayer was proscribed, and the Directory for Public Worship, put forth January, 1644-5, took its place. The Directory ordained that, "a fair register book of vellum should be kept, properly filled up, in every parish," and births, as well as baptisms, were to be registered by the minister. The Act of Parliament passed August, 1653, conflicted with the rubric, since a lay registrar henceforward had charge of the parish registrar. This Act both authorised a publication of banns after Church service, or at market places, by the appointed registrar, and civil marriages. The man and woman had to appear before a mayor or magistrate, and then the man, holding the woman's hand, declared that in the presence of God he took that woman for his wife, and also promised, in the presence of God and before the witnesses present, to be unto her a loving and faithful husband. The woman, in her turn, promised and declared similarly. It seems incredible, yet for a short time no other form of marriage whatever was lawful.

Remarkably few marriages were registered during the civil war in the disturbed districts; the young men had to fight instead of marry. The baptisms fell off partly because of the religious opinions, which held infant baptism unlawful or unnecessary, partly because the public ministers had scruples as to the worthiness of parents. The children of such were carried to other places to be baptised, where the minister had no authority to command the registrar to enter them, partly because a little fee had to be paid for registering. The books, when kept by civil registrars, usually mix a list of baptisms with others of marriages and burials. The three classes of entries go backwards and forwards, and here and there, in a very confusing manner, being first made on loose sheets of parchment and then bound. In 1661 the rejected clergy recovered their old places, and the registers being given up to them

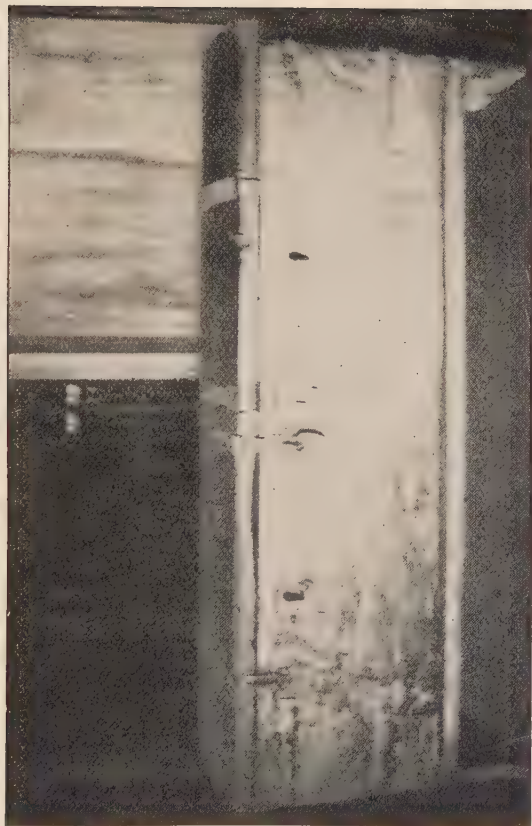
Latin was once generally used in making entries, but this was optional; some rectors kept to this language, and some preferred English mixed with Latin words. At length Latin completely died out. The little neat bits to be met with occasionally impart life and interest to pages of dreary repetition of the accustomed forms—*honesta vidua*, *filius populi*, a syngel woman, an ancient batchilir, an aged celibate, a noble warryore.

The Oldham registers begin in 1558, the first year of Queen Elizabeth, and 45 years before the registers of the mother Church of Prestwich, which do not begin until 1605. The books are preserved in 81 volumes, and are in most excellent condition, except the second volume, which was made on paper. Excluding this (vol. II.), all the old registers to the year 1812 are on parchment, and for the most part are clearly and beautifully written.

It was a requirement of the year 1558 that those on paper should be transcribed upon parchment, and for additional safety should be deposited in a parish chest, provided with three locks and three keys, and it is interesting to note that the old oak chest in the Church was provided with these three locks, thus fixing with fair certainty the date of the Church chest.

The general disturbance of registration during the civil war between King Charles and his Parliament (1641-1649) can be traced in our own registers: *e.g.*, they absolutely cease at 1637, and no entries occur again until 1643, when three entries of births are made. Then there is another significant gap until 1647, after which they become fairly regular until 1670.

Whether or not our registers passed out of the custody of the Church at this time is not evident, but if so, they were restored, and vol. IV. bears the frequent entries of Thomas Bridge, Edm. Hopwood, Robt. Hyde, and R. Haworth, who acted as officers or the act of marriage in their capacity as Justices of the Peace. Further interruptions occur in vol. V., between the years 1670-1679, and are particularly marked by Dr. Lake's dismissal of the then parish clerk for neglect in keeping the registers when he became incumbent of Oldham.



THE OLD CHURCH CHEST, c. 1558.

The first eleven volumes have been most handsomely rebound in white vellum at the cost of the following persons as memorials to their departed friends :—

Vol.	I.	...	Kate Cachemaille ...	...	1558-1634
,,	II.	...	Abraham Clegg ...	...	1624-1631
,,	III.	...	Annie Pellatt...	...	1633-1657
,,	IV.	...	Marianne Hamilton	...	1651-1660
,,	V.	...	Giles Shaw ...	...	1660-1694
,,	VI.	...	Ada S. Worthington	...	1695-1725
,,	VII.	...	H. H. Davenport	...	1726-1748
,,	VIII.	...	Mary J. Clegg	...	1747-1765
,,	IX.	...	Mary J. Clegg	...	1766-1792
,,	X.	...	I. B.	...	1748-1772
,,	XI.	...	Sarah Clegg	...	1792-1812

We now proceed to observe some of the interesting facts which are disclosed by a study of the registers, and one of the first things to observe is the great permanence of the names of our local families. The first name to appear on the register in 1558 is Richard Clegg, and among others which appear about this time and continue through all the succeeding generations are the names of

Cheetham	Booth	Whitehead
Neild	Crompton	Ashton
Tetlow	Heyward	Coup
Greaves	Bardsley	Collinge
Taylier	Winterbottham	Halkyard
Wylde	Lees	Travis
Whittaker	Chadderton	Mellor
Buckley		

whilst it is also interesting to observe the traces of the invasion of these hills by immigrant Flemish and other

foreign weavers both in the survival of names of persons and places, *e.g.*, in persons by such names as Hardmann, Scholes, Schofield, Wollfenden, Wolsenholme, Wolsen-croft; and in places such names as Delph, Friarmere, Friezland.

The following, taken from Mr. G. Shaw's compilation, show the exact contents of each of the volumes :—

1558. Oldham Church Registers commence. The first volume which has been re-bound in vellum, contains :—
 Baptisms from 1558 to 1611.
 Marriages from 1598 to 1611, and 1633 and 1634.
 Burials from 1558 to 1611.
 There are 21 Baptisms recorded for the first year, the first name being Richard Clegg, on March 20th.
 And 14 Burials recorded for the first year, the name of the first, Nicholas Taylier, on March 29th.
1593. Plague in Oldham mentioned in the Church Registers, the number of Burials being 17 during the month of July, and also 17 during the month of August.
1624. The second volume of Oldham Church Registers begins this year. It is the original paper book, very imperfect, and in bad condition. Contains :—
 Baptisms from 1624 to 1631.
 Marriages from 1627 to 1631.
 Burials from 1623 to 1631.
1633. The third volume of Oldham Church Registers commences this year, and contain :—
 Baptisms from 1633 to 1638; also from 1640 to 1643; and from 1647 to 1652.
 Marriages from 1633 to 1637; also from 1648 to 1649 & 1657.
 Burials from 1633 to 1637; and from 1648 to 1651.
 Richard Whittaker, Parish Clerk of Oldham.
1653. The fourth volume of the Church Registers commences .—
 Baptisms, 1653.
 Marriages, 1653.
 Burials, 1653.
 On the second page is written : This booke cost viii^s.
1660. The fifth volume of the Church Registers commences :—
 Baptisms, 1660.
 Marriages, 1660.
 Burials, 1660.

The following note relating to this volume is written on the second page :—

In the topp of the next leafe you find that this booke was bought April 13, 1661. And Afterwards you find in the said leafe & some other places that some things are registred in the yeares 1660, all which is true, for those things had beene kept in loose papers untill the booke was bought, & then Registred in this booke, all which is witnessed by

HENRY WHITTAKER,

Then Clearke.

On the third page :—

This booke was bought Aprill 13, 1661. And it Cost one pound and one shilling, whereof twele shillings and sixpence was given gratis by A P'ticular P'son, and the remainder was paid upon the parish Cost.

1695. The sixth volume of the Oldham Registers commences :—

Baptisms, 1695.

Marriages, 1695.

Burials, 1695.

On the first page is written :—

This Register book Belongs to the Parish of Oldham in the County of Lancaster it was bought in the year of our Lord 1695 By

John Tetlow, of Brodilane.

John Tetlow, of Cowlshaw.

Raphe Sandiford, of Chaderton.

And William Butterworth, of Crompton.

They being then Churchwardens. It cost Thirty Shillings.

1701. Number of Entries recorded in the Church Registers this yea :—

Baptisms, 138.

Marriages, 28.

Burials, 105.

During the three months, April, May, and June, a total of 46 Baptisms were recorded, 32 of which the trade, occupations, &c., we find mentioned, there being two Carpenters, one Carrier, four Coleminers, one Flaxdresser, one Fuller, two Husbandmen (Farmers), one Joyner, one Lymer, two Masons, one Mercer, four Paupers, one Reed Maker, two Taylors, six Weavers, three Yeomen. Remainder not specified.

1704. Nov.—Registers at Shaw Church commence. On the first page is recorded :—

“An Account of the Christenings, Weddings, & Burials, beginning in November in the year of our Lord God 1704, within the township of Crompton Heyside, and also as many as are baptized at Shaw Chappel.

1725. The seventh volume of the Registers begin Jany., and contain Baptisms 1726-1747, Burials 1726-1748. On page 4 is written :—

“This Book was bought by the Churchwardens of Oldham, viz.,

Abraham Milne, of Stampstone.

John Lord, Edge lane, Tanner.

James Wolstenholme, in Wood.

Thomas Bromiley, of Doghill.

Cost Two pounds & eight shillings.

May 16.—The Church Registers are now signed at the bottom of the page by J. Sugden, Cur. of Oldham, Benj. Dawson, James Mellor, Jona. Howard (Churchwardens).

1731. In the Register of Baptisms this year the Trade or Occupation of the Child's Father is mentioned. We classify them as follows :

Inn holders	5	Carpenters	6
Taylors	5	Weavers	99
Shoemakers	3	Colliers	9
Butcher	1	Labourers	22
Slators	4	Shepherd	1
Flax dresser	1	Soldiers	2
Carriers	3	Base Born (<i>i.e.</i> , Illegitimate) ..	10
Limers	4		

1735. The Registers this year record that the Christenings this year at Oldham and Shaw were 231 ; Marriages do., 29 ; Burials do., 213.

1747. Volume 10, Oldham Church Registers, contains :—

Burials—Oldham

1748-1772

„ Shaw Chapel

1748-1770

„ Royton Chapel

1758

„ St. Peter's Chapel

1768-1770

On page 1 we find :—This Book was bought by

James Wild, of New Earth.

William Travis, of Heyside.

William Rowbottom, of Hunt lane.

Abraham Clegg, of High Crompton.

Churchwardens of Oldham for the year 1747. Cost £1 : 7 : 11.

1751. Number of Entries recorded this year in the Church Registers, including those from Shaw :—

Baptisms, 222.

Marriages, 35.

Burials, 92.

1761. Number of Entries recorded this year in the Church Register, but not those from Shaw :—

Baptisms, 266.

Marriages, 35.

Burials, 230.*

* Of these 137 are described as : . . . A Child of . . .
Qy.—Was there an epidemic ?

In the Register of Baptisms this year the Trade or Occupation of the Child's Father is mentioned, classified as follows :—

Barber	1	Labourers.....	6
Blacksmiths.....	4	Mason	1
Butchers	3	Plasterer	1
Carpenters	6	Saddler.....	1
Carriers.....	4	Shoemakers	6
Carters	2	Shopkeeper	1
Clerk (Curate)	1	Skinner.....	1
Clothiers	6	Slater	1
Coal Miners	12	Tallow Chandler	1
Collier	1	Tailors	4
Farrier	1	Throwsters	8
Gentleman	1	Weavers	131
Glazier	1	Wheelwright	1
Hat Makers.....	11	Whitesmith	1
Husbandman	1	Yeomans	3
Innkeepers	6	B. B. (Illegimates).....	9
Joiners	4	Not Specified	25

The ninth volume of Oldham Church Registers commence Baptisms, Jan., 1766, and the book cost £2 : 11 : 0.

The following gives the form of marriage conducted before a Justice of the Peace during the time of the Commonwealth : -

1654. During the Commonwealth period Marriages were solemnized before a Justice of the Peace. It was enacted by Parliament that after 29 Sep., 1654, no marriage was to be celebrated within the Commonwealth of England without the Registers certificate that he had published banns on three successive Lord's days at the close of the Morning Exercise in the public meeting place called the Church or Chapel, or (if the parties preferred it) in the nearest Market Place on three successive market days. The persons intending to be married were to take this certificate to the nearest Justice of the Peace. The ceremony was not at all of a religious character, for in the presence of the Justice the man was to take the woman by the hand and pronounce plainly and distinctly the following words :—

“I (A. B.) do here in the presence of God the searcher of all hearts take thee (C. D.) for my wedded wife, and do also in the presence of God and before these witnesses promise to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband.”

Then the woman would in like form promise to be “a loving, faithful, and obedient wife,” whereupon the Justice was to declare them man and wife.

The following is the form which is written in the Oldham Church Registers. The Registrar, Mark Neild, would have to take the Book down with him to be signed by the Justice, and it is of no small size either :—

The agreem't and purpose of Mariage betweene Peeter Collinge of vpper Coohill within Ouldham, Cloth maker, and Anna Smethurst of Blocke-lane within Chaderton, both inhabitants within the Parish of Ouldham, and above the age of One and Twenty yeares, was by mee and by Direction from the said parties in writinge first Delivered unto mee published three severall Lord's days in the Parish Church of Ouldham at the close of the morning Exercise accordinge to the late Act of Parliament lately made, viz., one the 26th of February and one the 5th of March and one the 12th of March, 1653, and nothing hath beene objected against the saide intended Mariage. And the abovesaid parties weare Married by Edmund Hopwood Esqr. and one of the Justices of Peace for the County of Lancaster the 27th of March, 1654. In Testimony whereof hee hath subscribed his name.

EDM. HOPWOOD.

Witnesse :

John Collinge.
Henry Smethurst.
Marke Neild.

The following disclose curious local customs and announcements :—

1773. Feby. 1.—Married at the Parochial Chapelry of Saddleworth, Abraham Brooks, a Widower, of about 30 years of age, to Mary Bradley, a Widow of near 70, but as the Bride was a little in debt, the Bridegroom obliged her to be married in her Shift, and the weather being very severe, threw her into such a violent Fit of Shaking as induced the Compassionate Minister to cover her with his Coat whilst the Marriage was solemnized.

Feby. 10.—Married at the Parochial Church, in Oldham, Mr. Josseph Hallam, Merchant, to Miss Hopwood, Daughter of the late Revd. Mr. Hopwood, of the same place, an accomplished young Lady with a handsome Fortune.

The following is an account of collections made in Oldham Church between 1660-1662, by the authority of " Briefs " :—

Collected at Ouldham 17 June, 1660, for the Corporation town of southwolde the sume of seaventene shillings and eleaven pence.

Collected at Oulldham 14 Aprill, 1661, for Thomas Berisford, william Blunt, & others in the Parish of St. Bartholomew exchange the sume of Eleaven shillings and nine pence.

Collected at Shaw Chappell for the persons Abovesaid 7 Aprill, 1661, the sume of two shillings and tennpence.

Collected for the towne of Ilmister 2 June, 1661, the sume of 17s. 10d.

Collected towards rebuilding st. maries Church in scarborough 26 July, 1661, the sume of 8s. 3d.

Collected ffor ye Towne of Milton Abbas ye 18 of August, 1661, ye Some of Six Shillings and Seven pence.

Collected ffor great dreaton 8 September, 1661, the sume of 6s. 2d. & paid to one Henry Millington of ye sd. dreaton.

Collected ffor pontefrat 8 ber 6, 1661, the sume of 6s. 2d. & paid to Joshua stopford deupe.

Collected ffor the Collegiate Church of Rippon 10 November, 1661, the sume of 4s. 5d. and paid to John Chadwicke of Taunton, gent., high Constable.

Collected ffor Henry Harrison, A shippmaster, 29 December, 1661 : the sume of 4s. 1d. & paid to John Chadwick.

Collected ffor william Coperthwaite of kendall ye sum of 2s. 7d. 2 ffebruary, 1661, & pd. to ye sd. willm.

Collected ffor Thomas welby the sume of 3s. 3d. 9 ffebruary & paid to the sd. Thomas.

Collected for Thom. Thornton Ja. Nelson & Christopher millner 2s. 4d. 9 march, 1661, paid to Tho. Hunter.

Collected for william Jenkinson 2s. 2d. 23 march, 1661.

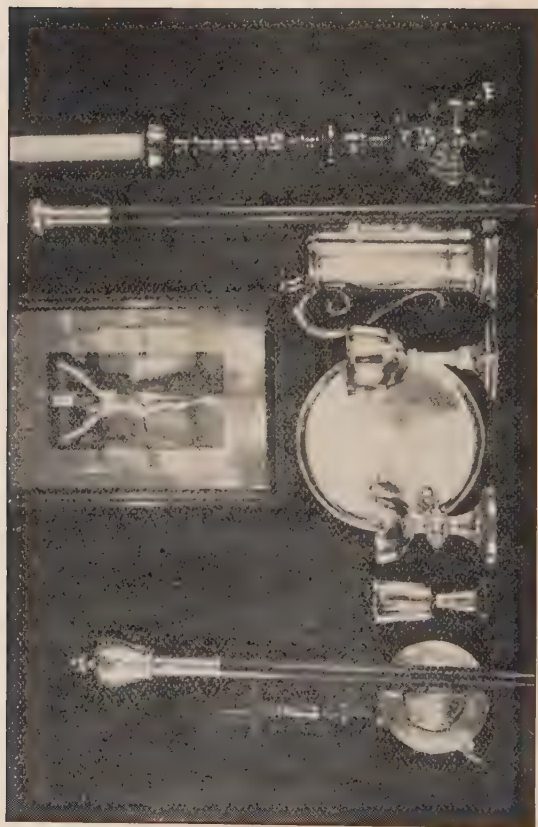
Collected for Charles Titford, Richard hammond, & leonard Savage in St. martins p'ish in westminster the sume of 5s. 2d. 12 october, 1662.

Collected for Tho. Harvie & marie Crimes the sume of 3s. 0d. October.

Collected for John Miller of workington 5s. 1d. 23 June, 1660.

Briefs were Letters Patent from the proper authorities authorising collections in churches. The purposes for which they were issued varied considerably, yet it may be taken for granted they were of a charitable character, but not always so. Great calamities either by individuals or communities probably gave rise to their first introduction, so that by the contributions of the many the losses of the few could be relieved or mitigated. But the direct object of the brief was always the same.

Briefs which were not purely personal—as granting a right to solicit alms by personal appeal—were usually addressed to the Clergy and churchwardens of the parishes, hamlets, and townships of the kingdom. They were directed to be read in extenso from the pulpit during the service, and at its close the clerk stood at the door with the money-box, exclaiming, “Please remember the Brief.” At a later period this was often followed by a house-to-house collection made by the churchwardens and beadles of the parish. The fund, so-called, was placed in the custody of the churchwardens, to be forwarded as the brief might direct. The sum actually collected was usually endorsed on the back of the document, which was returned therewith, and in many cases it was ridiculously small ; not unfrequently “nil.” In many cases entries were made in the parish registers, amounts collected, and also the purposes of collection, but for these entries our information would be much more limited than what it is.



HOLY VESSELS AND WARDENS STAVES.

VI.

CHURCHWARDENS.

The first trace of churchwardens we have been able to discover is in the year 1552, when King Edward VI. caused the inventory of Church goods to be made, the wardens then being—

Ralph Cudworth.

Ralph Winterbottom.

William Scholes.

John Buckley.

Then the next mention of names is in 1681, when they are—

Raphe Wolfenden, Oldham.

Richard Shepley, Ryton.

Edmund Tetlow, Chadderton.

James Collinge, Crompton.

And in this order the appointment of wardens continued, and survives unto our own times, as the traditional four wardens are still elected at the Easter Vestry.

The churchwardens' accounts embrace many quaint terms and payments, and illuminate very graphically the habits and customs of the 18th century.

CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS.

1733-1774.

1734. The accounts of James Wilde, George Booth, Thomas Tetlow, and James Buckley, Churchwardens of Oldham, 1734 :—

	£	s.	d.
Pd. to the Ringers their Wages	03	10	00
James Mellor, Dogg Whipper	0	13	0
Phil Buckley, for a Cote Cloth	0	12	8
Trimming for the same.....	0	08	2½

	£	s.	d.
1734. Taylor's makeing the Cote	0	04	6
Mr. Seddon's Bill for Wood for Biers	0	9	6
Thomas Davenport's, Bell Stepps	0	9	3
Dan'll Clegg's Bill	0	18	4
John Walwork, a Day Work and Rowler	0	3	6
Thomas Lighbown, for a set of Bell Ropes	0	16	2
John Lees, Cleaning Clock, &c.	0	08	0
Timot Lees, Bill	0	15	6
Titus Bardsley, for Stone for Church yard Walls...	01	15	6
Isaih Duncall, Leading Stones	0	6	9
Prideaux, Churchwardens, &c.	0	1	6
Cannons & Constitutions... ..	0	2	0
This Paper Book	0	3	6
A Straw Mat for Churchwardens' Seat	0	0	4
Pd. The Dean Rurall at 3 Visitations	0	10	0
Expenses at the 3 Visitations	0	12	0
Viewing the Church seven times....	0	8	0
Nov. 5, Decr. 25, Easter Sunday and Monday.....	0	16	0
Twice makeing presentments	0	8	0
Laying the Ley and writeing presentments	0	6	0
1736. Edward Barlow, for mending Candlesticks	0	0	6
Two Common Prayer Books, bound in Turkey' ...	3	10	0
Spent on ye Rev. Mr. Crouchley... ..	0	2	0
Paid Mr. Hopwood Bill for Wine	7	9	6
Mr. Dawson for Beesoms.....	0	0	6
1737. For making Quishion over again for Church-			
wardens' seat	0	0	3
6½ yard Black Cloth, for a Black, at 5s. per yd. ...	1	12	6
2 Pewter Basins & 2 Salvers for Communion Table			
& Font	0	6	2
Varnishes for Book Cases... ..	0	0	4
Repairing Clock, Jonathan Leese	0	5	0
An Order for Altering Prayers at Death of Queen .	0	0	4

1739. In the Wardens' Accounts for each subsequent year there appears an entry, "For the use of the Hearse," both from Oldham, Royton, Chadderton, & Crompton. The Churchwardens paid :—

	£	s.	d.
1739. James Mellor, Dog-whiper, wages	0	13	0
Theopl. Ogden, for Dogg Whippers' Breeches.....	0	7	0
James Mills, for Cutting a flower pott at Church			
Yates	0	2	6
1740. Ringers' Wages (for the year)	4	0	0
Richd. Davenport, for Candlesticks	3	3	0
John Ogden, for Whip	0	2	6
William Taylor, for Cloath for 2 Surplices	4	6	10½
Making them and Thred	1	1	0

1742. July 28.—Public Meeting to oppose paying the amount of Money for Liquor, &c., by the Church Wardens.

At a Parish Meeting at Oldham, met pursuatt to notice 10 days given July 28, 1742. Then agreed concluded and determined on by us whose names are hereunto subjoined being ye Principal Freeholders and Parishioners of the parish of Oldham, that is to say it is agreed as follows, viz. :—

That no more than Four shillings shall be spent on the Ringers in one whole year.

That no more than Eight shillings shall be allowed on ye Presentment accounts, nor any meeting to pass them at passing the Accounts five shillings, and that nothing shall be allowed for viewing the Church.

As witness our Hands :

THOS. PERCIVAL.*
SAML. TOWNSON.
JOHN BENT.
RAPH KERSHAW.
JAMES COCKER.
DANIEL CHADWICK.
JOHN COWPER.
JA. BUCKLEY.

		£	s.	d.
1743.	Widow Neild for Wine.....	9	12	3
	for a fform of Prayer for the ffast day	0	0	8
	pd. for a Brush for the Herse & 2 pair of Snuffers .	0	1	1
	pd. Bills for Timber for the New Yates	2	11	2
	„ to James Bardsley for 2 Stone Studs	0	5	0
	Pd. to Rd. Hornby for Drawing ye Dial, &c.	1	4	8
	„ to Edward Coppock for painting it	0	12	6
	„ for Drink at Leading of the Stone ..	0	2	0
1746.	pd. for a fform of Prayer for the Thanksgiving Day, Oct. 9th (this was on occasion of the defeat of the rebels at the battle of Culloden) April 16 .	0	0	8
	pd. for 3 orders About the Horned Cattle.....	0	2	0
	pd. Willi. Mosley for Sodering Silver Coop	0	3	0
	pd. to 3 passengers	0	1	6
	pd. to Danl. Jackson for Putting our Names up ...	0	2	0
1753.	For winding up Clock	0	10	0
	and for winding up Chimbs and peisin wirs	1	1	0
	For Ringing for prayers	0	6	0
	Cleaning Church top and bottom	0	8	0
	For carrying the whip this half yer.....	0	5	0
	Cleaning Candel Sticks 3 timbs	0	6	0
	Cleaning Candal Stick rod 2 times.....	0	2	0
1774.	Whip Carying on Sundays this Half year.....	0	5	0
	Geathering Stones this Half year	0	2	6
	Rushbairing.—Cleaning Church and Church yard.	0	1	2
	Paid to Jas. Winterbottom for 1 Pound of Goos- grease	0	0	5
	For helping Ogden and Lees to Repair 6th Bell ...	0	0	6

1752. November.—A SEXTON'S BILL :—

Churchwarden's of Oldham.

Detter to RALPH JACKSON, of Oldham.

As follows :	s.	d.
Caring whip this Half yer.....	5	0
Sweeping Church from Estor to Rushbaring five times	5	10
Cleaning Churchyard at Rushbaring	1	2
Getting Docks of Churchyard	1	2
Paid for beesams.....	0	5
	13	7

Reced. Contents of this Bill fm.

Ralph X Jackson.

	£	s.	d.
1753. Paid Miss Thompson for making one new Surplice, &c.....	0	16	0
William Simister Bill for one Surplice Cloath	1	16	5

1753. Work done p. M. TOWNSON for the Churchwardens of Oldham.

	£	s.	d.
Making a new Surplice	0	10	0
New-Necking an old one & repairing it & others...	0	5	6

The dog whipper, whose charges appear in the above accounts, was an official whose duties were indispensable owing to dogs following their owners to Church, and so necessitated someone to keep them in order.

“Viewing the Church” would be done when the churchwardens and other people looked over and inspected the Church, &c.

The churchwardens of the 18th century, as we have already shown, were semi-state officials, and had many and various duties to perform, and for which (judging from some of their accounts) there were paid an annual stipend. Among their ecclesiastical duties one was to visit the public-houses during service time to discover who (if any) were neglecting their Church duties.

Among their more secular duties in conjunction with the clergy and overseers, they assisted in the distribution

of the public charities, in the apprenticeship of youths to trades, the appointment of certain officials, and in the collection of the Church rate.

We give an example of one of these indentures of apprentices, together with a quaint application for an office, with its recommendation :—

This Indenture, made the ninth day of June, anno dom. 1703, and in the second year of the reign of our Most Gracious Sovereign Lady Anne, by the grace of God over England, Scotland, France, and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c., between Richard Hopwood of Oldham, in the County of Lancaster, Churchwarden, John Lyon of Leese Hall, and John Buckley of Sholver, Overseers of the Poor for the town of Oldham aforesaid, upon the one parte, and John Besswick, of Cowhill, in the Parish and County aforesaid, ffustian weaver, upon the other parte, witnesseth that the said Richard Hopwood, John Lyon, and John Buckley, by and with the allowance and consent of James Holte, of Castleton, and Joshua Horton, of Chaderton, Esqrs., two of her Majestie's Justices of the Peace ffor the County aforesaid, have putt, placed, and bound James Lowe, son of John Lowe, of Hollinwood, Taylor, an Apprentice with the said John Besswick ffor so long a terme of tyme as untill the said James Lowe shall attaine to the age of twenty-ffour years, to learn the trade, arte, or mistrey of a ffustian weaver, during all which said terme hee the said James Lowe shall reverence and obey the said John Beswick, his Master in all causes lawfull and honest. Tavern & Alehouses of Custome, Unlawfull Gameing, nor Dishonest Company hee shall not ffrequent, the profit of his said Master hee shall duly study to augm't and advance, hee shall not waste or mispend his Master's goods, nor them to any one lend without his Master's consent, his Master's lawfull secrets hee shall not reveale, ffornication he shall not comitt, matrimony hee shall not contract, nor marry

with any woman during the abovesaid terme. Hee shall not absent himselfe ffrom his Master's service by day or by night without his Master's knowledge or appointment, but shall behave himselfe in words and deeds soberly, truly, and honestly towards his said Master and all his ffamily dureing the abovesaid terme and as the laws of England in that case have provided. And the said Richard Hopwood, John Lyon, and John Buckley do, for themselves and their successors, covenant, grant, promise, and agree to and with the said John Besswick, his^r Executors, Adm^{rs}, and Assignes, and to and with every of them by these presents that they, the said Richard Hopwood, John Lyon, and John Buckley will some of them pay & give unto the said John Besswick, or to his Assignes, the full and just sume of Thirty Shillings of lawfull money of England at the sealing of these presents. And the said John Besswick doth for himselfe, his Executors, Adm^{rs}, and Assignes, covenant, grant, promise, and agree to and with the said Richard Hopwood, John Lyon, and John Buckley, and to and with their succeeding Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor for the town of Oldham aforesaid, that hee the said John Besswick, his Executors, Adm^{rs}, and Assignes, ffor the service silver and terme of tyme above-mention'd, will some of them teach, or cause to be taught, the above-named James Lowe in the trade, arte, or mistrey of a ffustian weaver in the best way and manner that hee or they can, that hee the said James Lowe shall be capeable of learning during the abovesaid terme. And ffurther also shall and will of their owne proper cost and charges ffinde ane p'vide for the said James Lowe sufficient meat, drink, and lodgings ffit and convenient ffor an Apprentice of his degree during the abovesaid terme. And still ffurther will ffind, provide ffor and allow unto the said James Lowe all manner of necessary aparrel both for working days and holydays dureing the said terme, and suffer him to goo to the Church constantly upon Sundays, and at the end of the terme deliver him up so well

appareld with his writeings uncanceled; and shall yearly and every year dureing the above-mentioned terme pay and give unto the said James Lowe the sume of sixpence at the ffeast days of Christmas and Pentecost in lieu of all his work and service. In witnes whereof the abovesaid parties have hereunto put their hands and seals the day and year above written.

JOHN BESSWICK.

HIS J B MARK.

Sealed, signed, and delivered in presence of us.

JAMES CHEETHAM.

JOHN WYLDE.

June y^e 12th, 1703.

We whose names are subscribed, two of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the s^d County, do approve & allow of the putting forth of the above-named James Low an apprentice to the aboves^d John Besswick according to the true intent & meaning of thy above-written Indenture.

JA: HOLTE.

JOSHUA HORTON.

Application and testimonial of candidates for office of governor and governess of the Workhouse:—

To Mr. John Gee, Overseer of Oldham, and the Genⁿ. of the Select Vestry.

Genⁿ.

An hand bill emanating from you having made its appearance, and which we deem a sufficient source of authority, stating that you are in want of a governor and governess of Oldham Workhouse.

We, the undersigned, beg leave to recommend to your special notice James Bardsley, and Martha, his wife, parishioners and residents of Caverlow, within Oldham, aged 53 years, and a fustian weaver by trade, and answering in every other respect, as fit and proper candidates for the situation you have to offer to the public. For sobriety, honesty, industry, & cleanliness, there character will bear the strictest

scrutiny, they having no children, and his wife, being a sharp, active woman of her age, and being remarkably clean, is capable of managing the domestic concerns of a large establishment, and having a thorough knowledge of housewifery in all its departments, such as washing, cooking, baking, brewing, shaping, making, mending, &c., all which she has been accustomed to for a considerable number of years. Not having a knowledge of what salary has been paid to former governors, I hope it may stand over till the day of appointment, in order that I may ascertain betwixt and then what I can do it at.

N.B.—He is capable also of keeping accounts, & as servants of the public they wish practically to shew their knowledge of *economy*, & not the mere gentlemanly habit.

MARY BROADBENT.

These various duties we have no doubt considerably magnified the office of churchwarden, but we very much doubt whether they enhanced the popularity of the individual, or indeed his personal spirituality, and we may safely congratulate the modern churchwarden in having divested himself of his more secular duties.

In these days he is chosen as the most trusted and respected member of the congregation, as the one most likely to devote himself and his time unselfishly to promote the best interests of the Church and parish.

And since the abolition of the Church rate deprived the ordinary ratepayer of any control over the Church collections, the chief concern of a modern vestry is to choose a person most cognisant with the needs and aspirations of the particular parish, and to entrust him and his colleague or colleagues, in conjunction with the incumbent, with the proper administration of their voluntary offerings.

Hence it follows that largely, and properly so, our vestries are increasingly attended by those who are most interested in the welfare of the Church and parish, and quite independent of the fact whether they happen to be or are not resident ratepayers in the particular parish.

We began with the names of the first wardens we found recorded, and we close with those who in this Quincentenary year are wardens of Oldham Church, one of which has served during the whole of the present vicariate and one for the greater part :—

Mr. W. Aspden.

Mr. E. Mills.

Mr. A. Cheetham.

Mr. S. Wilson.

SIDESMEN.

Mr. T. Whitmore.

Mr. A. Broadbent.

VI.

THE CHURCHYARD.

God's Acre, as all reverent minds love to regard it, must always have a cherished place in Oldham hearts, for here lie resting, "with feet towards the dawn," the hallowed dust of Oldham's forefathers for at least 500 years.

Until the end of the 18th century this was the only place of sepulture in Oldham. Then the chapel yard of S. Peter's was consecrated, and afterwards, in the early quarter of the 19th century, S. James's more commodious churchyard was added.

In these days it is difficult to recall the rural character which the churchyard and its surroundings presented even up into the middle of the 18th century, but the following extracts help us in some measure to picture the peaceful scenes amidst which, for succeeding generations, our rude forefathers slept.

* "1625—Oct. 20.—HORSEEDGE HALL. FIELD NAMES.—Indenture made between Edmund Taylor the Elder, of Horsedge, co. Lanc., gent., and Edmund Taylor the younger, of the same, gent., first part. And John Leaver, of Manchester, gent., 2nd part. Witnesseth that said Taylors in consideration of £300 by Leaver paid. Have demysed & to ferm lett to said Leaver All those Capital Messuages and tenements called Horsedge and the

* Shaw's Oldham Annals.

Mylne in Horsedge and the mulcture toll soken grindings of grain and corne and all emoluments to the same belonging in the holdings of Edm. Tayleur the younger and all the Closes in Horsedge called Baregate field, Rye field, Bancke field, above the Church (in Oldham), Green field, Barne feild, Gorsye field, Marlepyt meadow, Well meadow, Nan Grase, the Kirke Crofte, Marke feild, Mylne Meadow, Red Lee, Goffe Meadow, Blackend, Banckfeild beneath the Church, Spring Meadow and Pig-hill feild. And liberty to dig and make Marl Pitts and also to rid, stocke, and gett up all manner of brambles, bryars, bushes, thornes, gorse, & shrubs for the bettering and amending the said premises and to get sufficient hedge boote, house wood, & tinsel on the said premises for repaireing the hedges and fences thereof."

"1706—Memorandum.—It is agreed that the tenants of Horsecroft (?) shall have free way for Carts, &c., betwixt the Great Church Croft, after the side of the Little Church Croft, and so at the lower end of the Spout Church Croft, to a way that leads into Oldham town, but only for the Horsedge tenement."

"1763—Aug. 9.—Be it remembered that I. James Taylor, did ask and desire of Margaret Radclyffe, of Foxdenton, Widow (at the request of Mary Isherwood, of Horsedge, Widow), to have liberty to have the Corps of her husband, John Isherwood, carried over the two Closes or Fields called the Great and Little Church Crofts, into the Church Yard at Oldham, thear to be interred, and for ascertaining of the same, I. Mary Isherwood, have hereunto set my hand the day and year above.

Mary Isherwood.
her X mark.

In the presence of
Jno. Whitehead."

And it is still possible to trace the old stone foot stile in the north wall of the churchyard by which the path entered from the "Kirke Crofte" field.

We are in possession of a careful description, by Mr.

Higson, of Leesfield, of the churchyard and its surroundings on the south side, with some subsequent alteration in paths, which we gladly avail ourselves of.

“ The ancient parochial chapel of Oldham was enclosed on three sides by the lands of the Horsedge Estate, whilst to the south lay the King’s highway. On the southern side of that portion of the roadway now known as High Street lay the Kiln Croft, belonging to the ancient Grammar School, which stood just within the eastern boundary of the said close. The narrow passage known as School Croft, still follows the windings of the fence between the Kiln Croft and the adjoining field called the Ward Croft. In the latter was situate the old Dungeon, long ago removed. Within the same close St. Peter’s Chapel-of-ease was erected previous to 1768. When the chapel-yard was enlarged in 1806 the new portion was enclosed from the Mill Meadow. This meadow extended to the neighbourhood of the Town Hall, and received its name from the mill which formerly stood near the present Church Terrace at Mill End. Mill Street, near the King’s Arms, also derived its name from the same source. The next close was the Mark Field, stretching from the vicinity of the Town Hall to Retiro Street. The roadway known as Yorkshire Street did not then exist. Indeed, a little croft called the Pingot, then lay between Goldborn (now Church Street), and the Mark Field. From Retiro Street, to Bow Street, was the Whitehead Meadow. To the north of Bow Street, between Holebottom and Doll Stile, lay the fields known as the Great Shutt and the Little Shutt. Before the formation of Yorkshire Street, which was originally called Oldham Lane, the highway from Rhodes Bank to the Church and the town, was along a narrow winding thoroughfare. Different portions of this road now bear the names of Bow Street, Bradshaw Street, Church Street, and High Street. Stretching from High Street, across Church Lane, was a close of land known as the Spout Church Croft; to the north of the churchyard were the two fields called the Church Crofts, whilst a second Pingot lay to the east.

"In 1805 the old churchyard was found to be far too small for the rapidly increasing population of the thriving township, and an extension of the burial ground was urgently needed. This was accomplished by the addition of 4,029 square yards of land forming part of the two Church Crofts and the Pingot. This extension also required the demolition of six cottages which nestled near the old church. In 1827 the yard was again enlarged by the purchase of another portion of one of the Church Crofts. Since that time no further addition has been made to the churchyard.

"The following explains itself: 'Notice is hereby given that on the 11th day of September, 1823, an order was signed by Francis D. Astley, Esq., and the Rev. John Holme, clerk, two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the County of Lancaster, for stopping up a certain useless and unnecessary public footway in the town of Oldham in the division of Middleton in the said county, leading from a certain public street in the said town of Oldham called Rock Street, into the yard belonging to and adjoining the ancient parochial chapel of ease commonly called Oldham Church, and extending along and over the said yard, past the north-west corner of the said chapel, and so passing across the said yard to a certain street in Oldham aforesaid called Church Lane.'

"Another order was made which related to a footway leading from Rock Street into the yard, past the east end of the chapel, and along the south side into Church Lane.

"A third order mentions a footway leading from a certain public highway called the Gold Burn (now Church Street) into the yard, and extending past the south side of the chapel, into Church Lane."

The methods of interment appear to have been of a very simple character in earlier days, if we may judge by the following report:—

"1590.—In a book entitled 'Civil and Ecclesiastical State of Lancashire,' describing the mode of sepulture at

this time, and what it had long been in the north of England. The dead body was wrapped in a winding sheet or shroud of some coarse material and carried on a bier to its mother earth somewhat precipitately and not unattended with danger, considering the uncertainty of the signs of death, a few hours after dissolution. It was only in rare cases that the corpse was reverently placed in 'a coffin,' and in still rarer cases where lead was used."

The following enactment is a curious example of how the dead were intended by their burial to serve the interests of the living and to propagate the principles of protection in trade :—

"1677—May 23.—Act passed for BURYING in WOOLLEN. —Whereas an Act made in the 18th year of His Majesty's Reign, An Act for burying in Woollen only, was intended for the lessening the importation of Linen from beyond the Seas, and the Encouragement of the Woollen and Paper Manufactures of this Kingdom, the same had not had the Effect thereby intended.

"It is hereby enacted That from and after the first day of August 1678 no Corps of any Person or Persons shall be buried in any Shirt, Shift, Sheet, or Shroud, or any Thing whatsoever made or mingled with Flax, Hemp, Silk, Hair, Gold, or Silver, or in any Stuff or any other Thing whatsoever, that is made of any Material but Sheep's Wool only, upon Pain of the Forfeiture of five Pounds of lawful Money of England, to be recovered and divided as is hereinafter in this Act expressed and directed.

"And it is enacted That all persons in Holy Orders, Deans, Parsons, Deacons, Vicars, Curates, or any of their Substitutes do within their respective Parishes, Precincts, and places take an exact Account and keep a Register of all and every Person or Persons buried in his or their respective Parishes or Precincts, or in such common Burial places as their respective Parishioners

are usually buried : and that some one or more of the Relations of the Party deceased, or other credible Person, shall within eight Days next after such Interment, bring an AFFIDAVIT in Writing under the Hands and Seals of two or more credible Witnesses and under the Hand of the Magistrate or Officer before whom the same was sworn (for which nothing shall be paid) to the Minister or Parson, That the said Person was not put in, wrap or wound up, or buried in any Shirt, Shift, Sheet, or Shroud, made or mingled with Flax, Hemp, Silk, Hair, Gold, or Silver, or other than what is made of Sheep's Wool only, or in any Coffin lined or faced with any Cloth, Stuff, or any other Thing whatsoever made or mingled with Flax, Hemp, Silk, Hair, Gold, or Silver, or any other Material but Sheep's Wool, and if no relation of the Party buried or other Person shall bring an Affidavit as aforesaid to the Parson or Minister, within the Time aforesaid, That then the Goods and chattels of the Party deceased shall be and are hereby made liable to the aforesaid Forfeiture of Five Pounds, to be levied by Way of Distress and Sale thereof."

" 1686. — Copy of an AFFIDAVIT FOR BURIAL IN WOOLLEN.

" Coun. Lancr.

" John Hilton, of Crompton, in ye p'ish of Oldham, maketh Oath before mee yt Thomas Hardman, of ye same, lately deceased, was not put in, wrapt, or wound up nor buryed in any Shirt, Shift, Sheet, or Shroud, made or mingled with flax. hemp, silk, hair, gold, or silver, nor in any Coffin lined or faced with any Cloath Stuff or any other Material what ever made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold, or silver, or any other thing what ever but what is made of Sheep's Wooll Onely. According to ye act Entituled an act for burying in woollen. Witnesse my hand this 28th day of June, in ye second year of ye Reign of our Severaigne Ld. James ye 2nd King of England.

" Ano Dm. 1686.

" Jacob. Roberte,
Cleric."

A RECORD OF NOTABLE GRAVES AND CURIOUS
EPITAPHS IN THE CHURCHYARD.

THE CLERGY.

ROBERT CONSTANTINE, CLERK.

The grave of Robert Constantine is close to the third buttress on the south side of the Church. The inscription on the gravestone is much worn and defaced, so as to be almost illegible.

Inscription :—

Here lyethe the bodye of Robert Constantine. Clerk, who was buried December 14th, 1699; and Frances, his wife, who was buried March 29th, 1695; and Sarah, his daughter, wife of Ellis Ranshaw, of Manchester, Apothecary, who was buried May 22nd, 1695.

REV. THOMAS FAWCETT.

The grave is at the east end of the Church, about
20 yards from chancel window.

In memory of the Rev. Thomas Fawcett, Minister of this Church 43 years, who departed this life January 18th, 1818, aged 74 years.

THE REV. JOHN FALLOWFIELD.

Buried in a vault beneath the Church.

A marble tablet inside the Church, near the pulpit, contains the following inscription :—

In pious memory of the Rev. John Fallowfield, who for 24 years was Incumbent of this parish. Born 21st of January, 1780; died 17th of March, 1846. Beloved by his relatives, and respected by his friends. His mortal remains repose in a vault beneath this Church.

THE GRAVES OF PERSONS WHO HAVE SERVED THE OFFICE
OF PARISH CLERK AT OLDHAM CHURCH.

At the west end of the Church:—

Here resteth the body of John Wylde, who was late
Parish Clerk 42 years, and was buried A.D. 1722, in
the 77th year of his age.

Near the south door of the Church are two
gravestones inscribed:—

Thomas Neild, of Oldham, Clerk. Died July 20th,
1734, in the 51st year of his age.

Thomas Neild, of Oldham, junr., Clerk, who died 3rd of
June, 1742, in the 32nd year of his age.

At the east end, near the entrance to the vaults, John
Neild, brother of Thomas Neild, junr., who succeeded
his brother as Clerk.

Inscription:—

Here was interred the body of John Neild, of Oldham,
who (having served the office of Clerk of this Church
38 years with a decent behaviour and general respect)
departed this life June 7th, 1782, in the 60th year of
his age.

EPITAPH:—

When youth and beauty flourisheth most brave,
Death plucks us up and plants us in the grave:
Take care young men your precious time to spend,
Our lives are short, and quickly have an end.

On the north side of the Church. Inscription:—

Beneath were interred the remains of Abraham Jackson
(for upwards of 40 years Clerk of this Church), who

died June 20th, 1874, in his 73rd year. Also Ann, widow of the above, who died February 10th, 1901. Then follow the names of their children, who died in infancy, with this epitaph :—

Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
 Death came with friendly care :
 The opening buds to heaven conveyed,
 And bid them blossom there.

In the adjoining grave are buried other members of the Jackson's family who were Sextons at Oldham Church :—

No. 1.—James Jackson (late Sexton of this Church), who died Oct. 20th, 1818, in the 67th year of his age.

No. 2.—James Jackson (formerly Sexton of this Church), who died May 30th, 1833, in his 39th year.

No. 3.—Also Ralph Jackson, their son (late Sexton of this Church), who died Dec. 18th, 1877, in his 54th year.

THE OLDEST GRAVESTONES IN THE CHURCHYARD.

No. 1.—Near south vestry door :—Here lyeth the body of John Beck, late of Manchester, gentleman, who deceased Sept. 13th, and was buried Sept. 16th, 1672.

No. 2.—In the middle of churchyard on south side :—
 Here lyeth the body of James Bardsley, of Greenakers, and hee was 82 years of age, and hee dyed the 5th of May, Ann. Domm. 1674.

No. 3.—Near the middle of the south wall (inscription much worn) :—John —, Hollinwood, Aug. 15th, 1678.

No. 4.—Next to No. 3:—Here resteth the body of Abraham Buckley. Hee was buried the tenth day of February, in the year of our Lord God 1685.

No. 5.—About six yards from south vestry door (eastwards):—Here resteth the body of George Buckley, of Ogden, who was buried Nov. 13th, in the year of our Lord 1687.

No. 6.—At the east end, close to entrance to crypt:—Alexander Potter, of Foxdenton, gentleman, was buried here the 22nd day of June, 1691, in the 88th year of his age.

No. 7.—On south side, near entrance to churchyard:—The body of Edward Matthew, of Chadderton, was buried the 2nd day of February, 1691.

No. 8.—Also on south side, midway between entrance to churchyard and south door:—Here lieth the body of William Cheetham, son of John Cheetham, who was buried January, 1697.

GOVERNORS OF HENSHAW'S BLUE COAT SCHOOL
BURIED IN OLDHAM CHURCHYARD.

On the south side, near the middle of the churchyard:—
In memory of William Barrett, who for 16 years was Governor of the Blue Coat School in this town. Died August 28th, 1851, aged 51 years. Also Isabella, widow of William Barrett, Matron of the Blue Coat School for 36 years. Died Feb. 10th, 1871, aged 73 years.

On the north side of the Church there is a granite tombstone "erected by Old Boys":—

In memory of Thomas Croxton, who died 19th July, 1876, aged 46 years, having filled the office of Governor of Henshaw's Blue Coat School for 26 years. Also the following Blue Coat Boys are interred here:—

Thomas Giller, died 31st Oct., 1852, aged 12 years.

James Aldred, died 15th Nov., 1856, aged 12 years.

Walter Evans, died 10th Mar., 1857, aged 13 years.

George Paulley, died 1st July, 1863, aged 14 years.

Wm. Arrowsmith, died 11th July, 1872, aged 11 years.

THE GRAVES OF NOTABLE PERSONS IN OLDHAM CHURCHYARD.

On the north-east side of the Church is the grave of—

James Butterworth, formerly Postmaster of Oldham, and Author of several Histories of Oldham, who died Nov. 23rd, 1837, in the 67th year of his age. Also Hannah, his wife, who died Dec. 13th, 1836. She was truly a Christian.

Near the entrance gate of churchyard, on south front:—

Here lie the reliques of Catherine, daughter of Richard Morris, of Speke. She was first married to Richard Percival, of Royton, Esq., to whom she bare four sons. She afterwards married Thomas Kenyon, of Salford, gent., by whom she was left a widow, having no issue

by him. She departed this life, with an universal good character, Dec. 2nd, A.D. 1733, aged 73 years.

I.H. Caleno-chymic. Here Hall lyes.

Could physic fence death's dart,
Sure death had been delivered by his art.

Dec. 27th, 1712. Credo resurrectionem carnis.

In hope of a blessed resurrection, here resteth the body of George Hall, M.D. (son of the above John Hall), who died July 20th, 1753.

On the south side of the Church :—

Here was buried John Mellor, bottom of Northmoor, who departed this life July 5th, 1812, in the 72nd year of his age. Master singer at this Church, and Chelsea pensioner 45 years.

THE RADCLYFFE'S, OF FOXDENTON.

The grave is near the fourth buttress on the south side of the Church. The inscription (much worn) :—

Hie jacet Johannes Radclyffe, filius nater maximus, Alexandri de Foxdenton, arm qui obiit vicesio quinto die January, 1707. Annoque aetatis quarto.—Dorothea, etiam soror ejus quae obiit duodecimo die February, 1713. Annoque aetatis.—Elizabetha, etiam soror eju quae obiit, Septimo die Martij, 1713. Annoque aetatis.—Hie etiam Jane, filia Alexandri Radclyffe de Foxdenton, ejus quae obiit decimo quarto die July, 1716. Annoque aetatis secundo.

QUAINT AND INTERESTING EPITAPHS.

(Oldham, Lancashire.)

In memory of John Wolstenhulme, who died Jan. 13th,
1841, in the 36th year of his age.

Stop here a foot, and cast an eye,
As you are now so once was I,
As I am now, so you must be,
Therefore, prepare to follow me.

South Front in Churchyard.

In memory of John Gartside, who died May 28th, 1857,
aged 18 years.

We deeply mourn that one so young,
So tall, so vigorous, and strong,
Should like a flower in freshness bloom,
Then whither, die, and find a tomb ;
Yet God Almighty's will be done !
For death's the fate of everyone.
John's favourite objects next to life
Were rattling drum and sounding fife ;
But now he joins the choir above,
In notes of harmony and love.

Here resteth the body of Jane, the wife of John
Haughton, of Oldham, butcher. Buried the last day
of November, 1700. She was 41 years old and the
mother of 21 children.

In memory of Ann Hudson, who died Dec. 16th, 1791,
aged 54.

Sleep soft in dust, wait the Almighty's will,
Rise up with Jesus Christ, and be an angel still.

In memory of Abraham, son of Benjamin Clegg, who
died Feb. 1st, 1763, aged 21 years.

In patience I have run my race,
Into my grave I came apace :
Friends, repent whilst you have time,
For I was taken in my prime.

In memory of Samuel Elson, of Coldhurst, who died
April 28th, 1826, in the 77th year of his age.

Such a father, such a friend,
Ah ! to few are left behind ;
He lov'd a good and honest heart,
But dearest friends grim death will part.

Here resteth the body of Samuel Brierley, late Lieut. of
His Majesty's 57th Regiment. Died April 28th, 1823,
aged 42.

A friend sincere,
A partner dear,
A loyal soldier,
Lies buried here.

Here resteth the body of Abraham Taylor, of West
Street, who died Nov. 29th, 1831, in 74th year of his
age.

An honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image blest ;
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth.
If there's another world, he lives in bliss ;
If there is none, he's made the best of this.

South Side in Churchyard.

In memory of Robert Whitehead, of Glodwick, who died
March 15th, 1837, in the 47th year of his age.

Short and precious is this life of ours,
Tender as grass and frail as blooming flowers ;
O God, protect from every adverse wind
The tender child that I have left behind.
A long farewell, dear wife, I bid to you ;
My brothers all, and social friends, adieu.

South-East Side in Churchyard.

To the memory of Thomas Dendy, late of Horsham, in the County of Sussex, who was found dead Oct. 28th, 1768, on Hollinwood (supposed to be murdered). After being kept 19 days without being owned, was decently interred, in the 45th year of his age.

In memory of Mary, wife of Samuel Ogden, of Horsedger Fold, who died Aug. 1825, aged 56 years.

Behold this silent tomb, it doth embrace
A virtuous wife with Rachel's comely face,
Sarah's obedience, Lydia's open heart,
With Martha's care and Mary's better part.

In memory of Catherine, wife of George Wright, Bookseller, who died Mar. 18th, 1895, in 39th year of her age. She was one of the best gifts heaven sends to man—A good wife.

Sarah, wife of James Newton, who departed this life Jan. 22nd, 1857, aged 62 years.

She was—but words are wanting to say what.
Think what a wife and mother should be,
And she was that.

In memory of the Daughter of Samuel and Hannah Knott, of West Street, Oldham, who died Dec. 4th, 1822, aged 10 years.

Now ponder, youths, as these few lines you read,
How soon the worm must on your beauty feed ;
For I was young and gay and void of thought,
And lo ! the cruel flames my vesture caught.
My sufferings sore, my parents' heart did grieve,
But heaven sent death which did my pains relieve.

In memory of the children of Richard and Mary Ashton,
of Denton Lane. 1794.

We were to our parents as a rose—
Tender, sweet, and good ;
Ah ! but soon, you see, death called for us,
And nipt us in the bud.

East End in Churchyard.

In memory of John Winterbottom, of Yorkshire Street,
Innkeeper, who departed this life April 28th, 1831, in
the 49th year of his age.

Beneath this stone the hallow'd relics lie
Of one whose virtues none can magnify ;
A thousand hearts lament a much lov'd friend,
Whose upright heart pursu'd no selfish end ;
Modest, sincere, benevolent and just,
His noble heart now moulders into dust.

In memory of Joseph, son of Joseph and Ann Wright,
of Church Street, who died July 15th, 1826, aged
13 years.

Returning from my work at noon,
No thought of meeting death so soon,
Flying my kite (hard fate to tell)
I backwards down a coalpit fell.

In memory of Daniel, son of John and Betty Clough,
of Maygate Lane, who died April 1st, 1829, aged
24 years.

How near is death ! reflect, ye young and gay,
This found he, when the fatal floor gave way ;
Ah ! little did he think when entering there
The gulph of dread eternity so near.

Here was interred the body of Isaac Heywood, of
Thompson Lane, who died Oct. 3rd, 1819, aged
77 years.

Weep not for us, its all in vain ;
Weep for your sins, and them refrain.

In memory of Thomas Mills, of Vineyard, near Oldham,
who died June 28th, 1834, in the 25th year of his age.

At Union Mill I met my fate,
Assistance came, but came too late,
To extricate me from the flame,
Exposed their lives and lost the same.
No longer weep my partner, dear,
Who has for me shed many a tear :
In life, our hearts were both entwin'd,
And we to act were mind in mind.
But with my babe now here I lie,
For us no longer mourn and sigh ;
But be prepared with us to meet,
And bow yourself at Jesus' feet.

In memory of Isaac Clegg, of Maygate Lane, who died
Nov. 9th, 1836, aged 77 years. Also Mary, his widow,
who died June 7th, 1841, aged 80 years.

Not ostentatious, they as patterns stood,
Striving to render to their neighbours good ;
Economy and industry were mixed
With mild forbearance in their bosoms fixed.
In strict religious paths they wisely trod,
Hoping to gain th' approval of their God.

In memory of Mary Ogden, daughter of James Ogden,
of Greenacres. Died Feb. 5th, 1786, aged 63 years.

My dear Redeemer is above,
Him I am gone to see ;
And all that are in Christ below
Shall soon come after me.

Square Vault at East End in Churchyard.

Sacred to the memory of Alice, wife of Daniel Lees, of
Bankside. A person, for the benevolence of her
temper and the rectitude of her conduct, universally
and deservedly esteemed. In her were united the
affectionate wife, the tender mother, and the faithful

friend. She was liberal without profusion, charitable without ostentation, and religious without superstition. Having a hope full of a blessed immortality, she resigned her spirit into the hands of her Redeemer on the 4th day of June, 1809, in the 58th year of her age.

East End in Churchyard.

In memory of Phillis, wife of Isaac Clegg, of Glodwick Lane. Died Feb. 25th, 1856, aged 55 years.

Thou art come to the grave—we no longer behold thee,
Nor tread the rough path of this world by thy side ;
With love and with kindness we long did watch o'er thee,
But the Saviour called for thee, and we could not deny.

In heaven amidst the shining throng
She endless rest has found,
Where saints and angels tune their song,
And Jesus smiles around.

North-East Side in Churchyard.

In memory of Richard Scholes, of Hollins, who died Dec. 7th, 1832, aged 24 years.

Afflictions sore long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain ;
But death gave ease when God did please,
And freed me from my pain.
With sickness worn and sore oppress'd,
In hope of heaven he's gone to rest.

In memory of two Infant Children of Alexander Taylor, of Mumps. Died March 6th, 1831.

Bold infidelity ! turn pale, and die.
Beneath this stone two infants' ashes lie :
Say are they lost or saved.
If death's by sin, they sinned because they're here ;
If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear.
Reason ! oh, how depriv'd !
Revere the sacred page, the knot's untied ;
They died, for Adam sinn'd ; they live, for Jesus died.

In memory of John Ward, of Maygate Lane, who died
Jan. 10th, 1853, in 63rd year of his age.

It ever truth in epitaph was told,
Reader, for truth this character behold :
To act uprightly was through life his plan,
For such he lived and died an honest man.

In memory of Eli Garside, who died June 24th, 1822,
in the 17th year of his age.

When from the ladder's top our Eli fell,
He cry'd aloud, O God ! be merciful.
Whoe'er thou art that stops to read this stone,
Pause to awhile, and think how soon life's gone.
He that lies here was once in health like thee,
And in an instant in eternity.

In memory of Samuel Goodman. Died Sept. 20th, 1828,
aged 20 years.

My death came by a fall in a coalpit.

I was taken from my parents dear,
Quite in the bloom of youth ;
For Christ has called me hence away,
That they may know the truth.

In memory of Harriet, daughter of Thomas and Betty
Needham. Died Nov. 6th, 1844, in her 20th year.

Sleep blest creature in thy urn,
Our sighs shall not awake thee ;
We must follow in our turn,
And then we'll overtake thee.

In memory of John Whitehead, of Glodwick, whose life
was spent in the discharge of those duties which his

deep learning, useful knowledge, and philanthropic disposition enabled him to perform. He died Jan. 3rd 1815, aged 64 years.

Incessant study mak'd his years ;
 If you his public worth had known,
 You would bestow some friendly tears
 O'er him who lies beneath this stone.

Sacred to the memory of Joseph Tweedale, of Lowerhouse, aged 44 years, who unfortunately lost his valuable life, along with two of his sons—Robert, aged 17 years, and James, aged 13 years—by the falling of Lowerhouse Mill, Oct. 31st, 1844. This stone was purchased by the Weavers. &c., of Lowerhouse Mill, as a token of respect and esteem to the aforesaid Joseph Tweedale, their late foreman.

East End in Churchyard.

Sacred to the memory of Thomas Wolstencroft, who died Oct. 22nd, 1851, in the 55th year of his age.

His languishing head is at rest,
 Its aching and thinking are o'er ;
 His quiet immovable breast
 Is heav'd by affliction no more.

In memory of Mary, wife of John Holland, of Oldham, who died June 24th, 1833, aged 42 years.

Grace was in all her steps,
 Heaven in her eye,
 In every gesture, dignity and love.

Here was interred the body of James Butterworth, of
Maygate Lane. Died Nov. 2nd, 1762, aged 58 years.

Go home, dear son, and cease your tears,
I must lie here till Christ appears ;
My debts are paid, my grave you see ;
Wait patiently, you'll follow me.

Sacred to the memory of Esther, wife of John Taylor,
of Lord Street, who died June 22nd, 1820, in the 31st
year of her age.

Farewell ye limpid springs and floods,
Ye flow'ry meads and mazy woods ;
Farewell thou busy world, where reign
Short hours of joy, and years of pain.
Brighter scenes I seek above,
In the realms of peace and love.

Stop ! reader, stop ! let nature claim a tear,
A woman lovely once lies buried here.

North Side in Churchyard.

Here resteth the body of Theophilus Scholes, of
Sholver, who died May 22nd, 1784, aged 82 years.
Also Jonathan, his son, who died Nov. 4th, 1813, in
the 78th year of his age.

Farewell vain world, I've seen enough of thee,
And now am careless what thou say'st of me ;
Thy smiles I court not, nor thy frowns I fear,
My cares are past, my head lies quiet here.
What faults you saw in me take care to shun,
Go home and look, there's something to be done.

In loving memory of Major, son of John and Elizabeth
Bamford, of Oldham, who was drowned whilst bathing,
June 28th, 1820, aged 18 years.

Nipt in the vernal bud of blooming years,
 Here much-loved Major peaceful rests his head ;
 With constant step he trod the paths of truth,
 Nor shunned to follow where fair science led.

In memory of Sophia, daughter of Adam and Bathsheba
 Butterworth, who died Mar. 1st, 1849, in her 16th year.

Her heart sincere, her disposition mild,
 No parent ever had a lovelier child ;
 So much Sophia like an angel grew,
 Heaven gave her spirit wings, and home it flew.

AN UNFORTUNATE FAMILY.

In memory of Thomas Garforth, of Glodwick, who
 unfortunately lost his life by an explosion of fire-damp
 at Rhodes Bank Colliery, July 2nd, 1841, in the 32nd
 year of his age. Also Eliza, his wife, who departed
 this life Nov. 26th, 1843, in the 29th year of her age.
 Also Jane, their daughter, who was accidently drowned
 on the 1st day of April, 1840, in her 3rd year. Also
 Mary, their daughter, aged 5 years, and Sarah Ann,
 their daughter, aged 1 year and 3 months, who were
 both drowned together on the 3rd of May, 1841.

West End in Churchyard.

In memory of Thomas Fletcher, of Westwood, Inn-
 keeper. Died Mar. 22nd, 1833, aged 62 years.

A husband kind, a father dear,
 Such was the man that resteth here ;
 Affliction sore he long did bear,
 And much good council lov'd to hear, .
 Until his spirit took its flight
 Unto a world of pure delight.

In memory of Sarah, daughter of Joseph and Mary Ann Taylor, of Warrens, near Glodwick, who died Dec. 8th, 1843, aged 16 years.

O death, thy rude remorseless awful power
Has struck in opening bloom this pretty flower ;
She was her parents' only hope and stay,
Who ceaseless mourn o'er Sarah's mouldering clay ;
To all their hopes a lasting blight is given,
Their only wish—to meet again in heaven.

In memory of John Rawson, who died Nov. 17th, 1828, in the 63rd year of his age.

Not unattended round his bier,
His children's sighs to heaven ascend ;
Each mourner's pity drops a tear,
And nature weeps an absent friend.

NAMES OF SOME WHOSE MEMORIALS CAN NO LONGER BE TRACED.

Rev. Isaac Harpur, Feb. 16th, 1695, having been Curate of Oldham 27 years.

Rev. James Lawton, Sept. 4th, 1702, Minister of Newton Chapel.

Old Mr. James Hulme, Feb. 10th, 1706, Minister of Chelmerton.

Rev. Richard Hopwood, Oct. 23rd, 1766, Curate of Hey Chapel.

It will be observed that the oldest gravestone which can be deciphered is 1672, and considering the very severe climate and conditions to which the memorials are exposed, this is a fairly old memorial to survive.

It should also be noted that, with a few later exceptions, the memorials belong to the 18th and the first half



THE SUN DIAL AND MOUNTING STOOL.

of the 19th centuries, a period conspicuous for the grandiloquent manner of obituary epitaphs.

We have quoted many for their quaintness and local colouring, and some because they belong to a period of ecclesiastical life and religious spirit never likely to re-appear.

But we cannot read them without observing the notable contrast they create with the modest religious humility of the periods immediately preceding them, where the holiest seek for mercy and implore our constant remembrances on their behalf, and we gratefully record the fact there is an increasing desire in our own day to exhibit reverence for our departed by the fewness and modesty of our words, and we further hope that the memorials to our Christian dead may become less the instruments of pride and display, and more and more the means by which they confer lasting benefits upon posterity, and so inspire in succeeding generations the pious invocation :

Requiescant in pace.

THE SUN DIAL.

This had its place either on the old Church or as a separate erection in the churchyard, but by its shape we should conclude it was fastened to the fabric, as it corresponds to the style of Church dials not infrequently attached to the façade of the south porch.

“The earliest mention of a sun dial at Oldham yet discovered appears to be in 1659. On March 1st of that year (or 1660 new style) Thomas Winterbotham, of Lees, freemason, made his last will, and desired that his body should have Christian burial in the churchyard at Oldham ‘at or as near the Dyell as may be.’”

THE MOUNTING STOOL.

This, too, was a necessary part of the equipment of a moorland churchyard in the olden days, and the present writer has had described to him how the narrator's great grandfather and great grandmother rode pillion week by week to Oldham Church from one of the hamlets on the north-east moors with their luncheon tied in one handkerchief and Bible and Prayer Book in another.

How easily we can picture those sturdy moorland yeomen and their dames after their duty done in worship, sacrament, and song, mounting the old stone step for the homeward journey with their yelping dogs about them.

THE STOCKS.

Although these were not ecclesiastical accessories, yet often these instruments of civil law had their places adjacent to the churchyard, and we observe that in the Erastian days of the 18th century the matters of Church and State are often closely allied both in the officials and in the duties imposed upon the Church by the State, and until Oldham was incorporated as a municipal borough both the constables and the overseers had their centre of official order in the ancient Easter Vestry.

“ 1697.—CONSTABLES OF OLDHAM :—

John Tweedale, of Counthill.

John Ogden, of flogg lane.

“ The Constables in former times were quite different from what they are in the present day. Two persons were appointed annually for that office in the Town of Oldham, and were selected from the substantial people of the town. Every year they had to render an account of



THE STOCKS AND GURGOYLES.

the receipts and disbursements of the 'Constable Lay.' Some of the payments were disallowed, & in that case they had to bear the loss. Their duties were very varied and multitudinous, as will be seen by a Copy of one of the Constables' accounts, the first we have as yet been able to find. Many items are no doubt very singular, but they help us to understand how the town was governed in olden times.

"In one of the Constables' accounts the 'BUTTS' are mentioned as being near 'PRIEST HILL.' The STOCKS would be at the Church Gates. The 'DUNGEON' stood at the head of a 'CLOSE' called the WARD CROFT, and would be situated on the south side of High Street about opposite the end of Curzon Street."

1718—Constables' Accounts.—The following payments are recorded :—

	£	s.	d.
going with Elias Hall to the House of Correction.....	0	2	0
paid for makeing Butts near Priest hill	0	5	6
a Hugh & Cry Going to Sadleworth	0	0	2
pd. for mending the Lock & Key for the Dungeon	0	0	3
pd. for mending the watching Tooles or weapons	0	0	6
pd. Edmd. Tetlow and his Assistance for Bringing the Stone for the NEW STOCKS to Oldham	0	3	10
paid to Ja. Paulett for working the Stones for Stocks	0	10	2
to Jno. Walwork for his wood and work tow'ds Stocks	0	7	0
to Jno. Broadbent the Smyth for Iron work for the Stocks..	0	1	4
to Isaac Cocker and Hen. Gartside for Shifting Earth and Leading away. About the Stocks.....	0	1	4
for Red Lead and Linseed Oyle and a new Lock.....	0	1	2
to Broadbent for mending the Watching Weapons and other work about the Constables' Seat in the Church	0	0	6
pd. to Capt. Gregg or Clark for A Mittimus for Rich. Smethurst besides further charges and attendance	0	3	6

THE OLD WEATHER COCK

Is one of the few relics of the old Church still in possession of the Church authorities, and is a very considerable bird, measuring from head to tail 3ft. 9in., and from comb to claw 4ft. At certain periods he receives a coat of paint to keep him in good preservation, and as

he has kept watch from the highest point over Oldham for nearly 100 years we give him a place among our illustrations. He will also be perceived at the end of the Crypt.

1753. WEATHER VANE Erected on the Church Tower. EDWARD BARLOW had been entrusted with the work. The a/c for the same was as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Jan. 19.—Paid Moses Davenport for Cast work for ye			
Cock	1	18	4
Mar. 17.—Paid Mr. Colier for guilding...	0	18	0
Paid for Lead and Iron and ye work of			
Making ye rod fast	0	4	0
Wages for Making ye Cock	1	6	0
	£4	6	4

June 13, 1753.

Reed, ye Contents of this Bill By Me,
EDWARD BARLOW,
Oldham.

THE SEXTONS OF OLDHAM CHURCH.

This was always a distinct office in the old days, but was sometimes associated with the quaint office of ‘dog whipper,’ as the following discloses.

In 1686 Ra. Jackson is mentioned as Sexton of Oldham Church, and on March 5th, 1694, old Raphe Jackson, the Sexton, was buried; and on September 3rd, 1721, Raphe, son of Raphe Jackson, the young Sexton, was baptised.

“1742—April 19.—DOG WHIPPER appointed. At a publick Meeting of Inhabitants of the Parish of Oldham, it was Unanimously agreed that the Saxton should receive from the Churchwardens of the said Parish the sum of Ten shillings for one whole year from the date above. In order and for and in consideration, that the said Ralph Jackson should whip the DOGS OUT of the PARISH Church of Oldham aforesd, and keep other Deceancy and good in the sd Church Every Sunday betwixt Services.”



THE OLD WEATHER COCK.

THE CHURCHYARD AS AN OPEN SPACE.

The present vicar and wardens have consulted with the municipal authorities upon the possibility of the churchyard being laid out with shrubs and seats as an open space at the public cost, and whilst this would enable the Church authorities to have the churchyard in much better order, it would at the same time confer a very considerable benefit upon the general public in providing a very large open space in the very centre of the town, and we hope the day is not very far distant when this amicable arrangement between the municipal and ecclesiastical authorities may be achieved.

VIII.

THE DISPERSED PROPERTY OF
THE CHURCH.

There is no sadder duty of the writer upon the past than to have to record the loss and dispersion of Church property, consecrated and made sacred by holy uses, and the bitterness of regret is made the more poignant when it is possible to point to the past neglect and indifference of Church authorities as the chief cause of their dispersion.

But there is one very strong plea to urge at the present time for the restoration of Church property, viz., that no longer is the possession of Church goods a mere parochial matter, but in these days is a diocesan one, so that no property can be removed without a special faculty granted by the Bishop.

And in our own case a resident incumbent charged with the special responsibility of caring for all Church property is a protection which should make absolutely secure the certainty of handing on from one successor to another the terrier of Church goods.

We thus venture to appeal to all who may be in knowledge of the whereabouts of Oldham Church property to

use their influence towards the restoration of such to the present Church authorities.

PROPERTY RECOVERED.

1. An oak altar table.
2. Some old altar linen.
3. A carved oak finial from the old choir screen.
4. The old Jacobean vestry table.
5. The old lectern Bible.
6. The plans by Sir Charles Barry.

DISPERSED CHURCH PROPERTY.

<i>Description.</i>	<i>Present Owners.</i>
The old choir altar table	Unknown.
The altar tables of the two chapels...	Unknown.
The old altar ornaments	Unknown.
The old vestments	Unknown.
The old choir and chapel screens ...	Unknown.
The old font... ..	Oldham Municipal Authorities.
The old carved oak benches	Unknown.
The old carved altar rails	Unknown.
The old Jacobean pulpit	Unknown.
The old brass candelabrum	Unknown.
The painted Royal arms	Unknown.
The old Church clock	Oldham Municipal Authorities.
The old sundial	Oldham Municipal Authorities.

<i>Description.</i>	<i>Present Owners.</i>
An old Church Brass... ..	Unknown.

“Jas. Butterworth, in the History of Oldham, remarks :—‘On a brass plate affixed to one of the pillars is the following inscription :—

“After various conditions of life, here at last, at the foot of this pillar, resteth the body of Oliver Shaw, of Heyside, Gent.

Aged near 73.

What I was is passed by,

What I am away will fly;

What I shall be none does see,

What then in that, my joys will be.

He died August 1st, and was buried Aug. 5th, 1706.

On the top of the plate is the Arms of his family, with the motto ;—

“Tri uni Deo gloria.”

M.SS., probably lent and not returned ...	Unknown.
The escutcheons of the private chapels ...	Unknown.

IX.

THE OLD ENDOWMENTS

The ancient endowments are always a part of the responsibility of a community and posterity.

In ancient days the Church was the chief custodian of private and personal benefactions, and so it came about that when an individual desired to benefit the community in which his life had been lived and his fortune acquired he more often than not used the corporate body of the Church as the instrument for dispensing the purpose of his intentions and goodwill.

Thus there has gathered round the ancient life of our mother churches a number of benefactions of which the Church authorities have been the chief almoners, and on the whole no better instrument could have been used, for in the absence of official and municipal life the ancient vestry of the parish church was the only instrument to express local and parochial opinion and influence.

With the wider development of national and civic life the natural evolution has been that some of the ancient endowments have lost their more distinctly ecclesiastical and parochial character, and have become merged in the wider provincial and municipal interests.

National instruments like Charity and Ecclesiastical Commissions have very properly examined, and some-

times revised, the administration of local benefactions, with the result that the Church has not infrequently been released from duties and responsibilities which, whilst conferring no particular benefit upon her as a spiritual instrument, exposed her administration of these charities to much suspicion and ill-will.

Thus, whilst we may sometimes regret the divorce from religious association which these revisions have involved, yet we feel sure the Church in her spiritual capacity has gained.

We append, then, the list of ancient benefactions associated with Oldham Church not merely for sentimental and antiquarian reasons, but that we may read the motives and bear in mind the reverent and good intentions of some of our forefathers.

Whilst it is always well to bear in mind that change of circumstance which justifies the revision of administration at one period may also call again in some future time for further revision, but that through all changes and revision the original intention of the donor is the one obligation which must be carried out in act as well as spirit as near as may be.

But before proceeding to record the more public charities, we first note some that are purely ecclesiastical in character :—

1452. Mr. Ralfe Langley, Parson of Prestwich, leases Tithes of Oldham to Sr. Lawrance Assheton, Priest.

1453. Aug. 24.—RALPH LANGLEY, Parson of Prestwich, leases to Sr. Henry Pendlebury, Chantry Priest of Midlteton, the greater part of the Tythes, Oblations and Emoluments belonging to the CHAPEL of Oldham for three years at an annual rent of £28 13s. 4d.

1517. March 24.—Nicholas Cowper, Capell, de Owldam, has a grant of a Croft in Oldham from William Langley, Parson of Prestwich.

1583. Aug. 19.—Will of Edmund Assheton, of Chadderton, esq., my body to be buried in the church of Oldham, together with my brethern in hope. Mentions disposing of his goods, cattell, &c., to his son and heir-apparent James Assheton, the use and occupation of the rectorie and parsonage of fframptoun and Wykes demaynes within the county of Lincoln, and a lease of the tythes of oates and grayne in the townes of Oldham, Royton, and Chatterton. . . . To James Assheton my kinsman, Bachellor of Arte in Cambridge, tenn pounds yerly during the contynewance of the said lease of fframpton if he, the said James Assheton, live so long, . . . To Mr. Vicker, of Rachdale, fortie shillings for a remembrance to coneynewe oure old ffriendshippe.

1597. Sep. 4.—TYTHES OF CHADERTON, OLDHAM, ROYTON, and CROMPTON. A conveyance was made this date by James Assheton, of Chaderton, esq., to Richard Assheton, of Middleton, esq., Nicholas Banastre, of Altham; esq., and William Assheton, of Clegg, gent., of all the tythes of oats, corn, and grain growing within the towns of Chaderton, Oldham, Royton, and Crompton, with the rents reserved, to hold in trust to the said James for his life, remainder to Richard Assheton, his brother, and his issue male in failure to the issue of Walter Assheton, late of Grays inn, esq., deceased, in default to such of the name of Assheton as shall happen to inherit the manor and lands of Chaderton paying the yearly rents, duties, and services for the same. 1329

There had been a great feud between Edmund Assheton, of Chaderton, and James Chetham, of Nuthurst, gentlemen; farmers of the tythe corn of Nuthurst, and James Assheton, of Chaderton, esq., farmer of the tythe corn of Chaderton, the matter in dispute being certain lands affirmed by one party to be in the parish of Manchester, and by the other party in the parish of Prestwich-cum-Oldham, and subject to pay tythes either to the warden and fellows of Manchester, or to the rector of Prestwich. The controversy was ended 1 Feby., 39 Eliz., by the meditation of William Langley, the rector, and by the arbitration of Nicholas Banastre, esq., and William Assheton, of Clegg, gent., for the lives only of the litigants, the arbitrators considering that great sums of money might be spent in law and old friendship be broken, and the title still be left undecided.

The above show that from very ancient times there were certain dues, oblations, and emoluments existing in the chapelry for ecclesiastical purposes.

1646. Dec 10.—At the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents, Edmund Ashton, of Chadderton, in the County of Lancaster, being formerly fined fourteene hundred and fourteene pounds with a proviso that if hee should settle fiftie poundes per ann. upon the Chapelry of Oldham for the maynteynance of a

preaching minister there for ever, and fourty poundes per annum out of the said tythes of Oldham upon the chappell of Shawe for the mayntenance of a preaching minister there for ever, the fine should then bee five hundred and fowerteene poundes. Now for that it appears that the said addicon of fiftie poundes per annum to the chappell of Oldham will not make up a sufficient mayntenance to the incumbent, it is therefore ordered that if the said Edmund Ashton shall likewise settle the residue of the profitts of the rectory of Oldham, being fiftie poundes per annum, upon the said chappell of Oldham, then the whole fyne to bee allowed, and hee to bee discharged.

Jo. Leech.

1665. Feb. 14.—EDMUND ASHTON and the
LIVING OF OLDHAM & SHAW..

Whereas Edmund Ashton Esq. and James Ashton his sonne have by their indenture of the 16th of Decr. 1646 conveyed the rectory of Ouldham in the County of Lancaster of the yearly value of £140 a year in trust as by the said indenture is expressed ; it is ordered that Mr. ROBERT CONSTANTINE minister of Ouldham aforesaid approved according to the Ordinance for Approbacon of Publique Preachers be and he is hereby appointed and authorised from time to time to take and receive to his owne use the profits of the said rectory for such time as he shall discharge the duty of the minister of the said place or untill further order of the said Trustees together with all arrears thereof to him due out of the premisses since he became minister there; the said Robert Constantine paying out of the premisses unto these Trustees or unto Mr. Robert Stockdale their receiver the yearly sume of forty poundes ; and the said Mr. Stockdale is to permit the said Mr. Constantine to hold and receive the same accordingly paying unto him the said £40 a year accordingly provided that this order be first entred auditor ; and the said Mr. Constantine is to give good security to be responsible for the said £40 a year from tyme to tyme together with the arrears from the tyme of his enjoyment of the said profitts.

The above reveals how the Commissioners of the Commonwealth attempted, out of their fines upon the then owner of the tithes, Mr. Edmund Ashton, of Chadderton, to create a separate rectory for Oldham.

TITHING IN KIND.

“Three tythe Barns in the Chapelry of Oldham, viz., one in Oldham containing six bays, one in Chadderton, in Stock Lane, three bays, one in Crompton containing four bays, with room about each for a cart and four horses to turn.

"The custom of tything calf, wool, lamb, pig and goose is one at seven and two at seventeen, for a house a penny, hay a penny, garden a penny, hens halfpenny, cow and calf three halfpence, lamb and sheep, under seven, pence a piece, colt a penny, oblations threepence for man and wife, for a single person a penny oblation, mills fourpence, plow one penny, demi-plow a halfpenny.

"This is a true terrier of what belongs to the parsonage of Prestwich-cum-Oldham according to the best of my knowledge, the best information I can learn about it since I came to be Rector.

LEVETT HARRIS, Rector of Prestwich.

June 3rd, 1778.

Samuel Hope.

James Barritt.

Samuel Livesey.

Richard Walker.

Thomas Croft.

John Ramsden

} Witness
our
hands.

"The above is evidently a quaint return between the Rector and some of the tenants on their liability in tithe of kind in the 18th century.

[89.] THE OLDHAM PETITION, 1664.

"A Copy of Oldm. Petition.

"To the right houn'rble the Lords and Comons now assembled in Parliament.

"The Humble Petition of ye Inhabitants of Oldham in ye county of Lancaster,
Sheweth

"That Oldam is now reputed to be a Parochial Chappell to Prestwich; Though antiently Oldam was really a parish of itself, and it hath had constantly Sepulture Baptisme and ye receiveinge of ye Communion administered in it, till ye commencement of these late lycentious tymes, since when sevrall Ministers have been forced upon us, & lately one Robert Constantine; who hath denied & doth still deny to pform those Duties accordinge to the Form pscribed by the Liturgy of the Church of England; Yet it hath been of late ye custome for ye Rectors of Prestwich to nominate and appoynt a parson to officiate att Oldam; & by yt means ye Rector of

Prestwich hath gathered Tyths (wch are of value to maintain an able orthodox minister) & in Lieu thereof hath ever furnisht us with a mendicant Preacher ; so yt yor Petitioners Tyths are withdrawne from them by Strangers—and yet ye parochial Chappell at Oldam not at all supply'd with a minister capable eyther to helpe himselve or to do right to ye Inhabitants.”

“Yor Petitioners therefore doe humbly pray yt by an Act of this psent Parliament wee may be made a parish of orselves. And yet his moste sacred Matie (for whose long and prosperous Raigne wee do heartyly pray) may our Patron ;”

“And wee yor Petitioners and their children's children shall be bound ever to pray for you and yors &c.”

Ano. Dmi, 1664.

“Edward Kenyon Rector of Prestwich gave great offence to many of the parishioners of Oldham as they were given to understand & as his actings seemed to declare yt he intended to divolve Ouldham in the Parish of Prestwich & make it a chapelrie.”

“Whereupon the parishioners not willing to loose their ancient rights and privileges consulted to join in Petition to the Reverend Father in God George Ld Bishop of Chester for Redress of such as they apprehended Injuries offered by the said Rector. But the said Petition was not preferred to the Bp, but kept in the Hand of some of the Parishioners hoping yt at ye Return of the Worshipful Edmund Asheton out of France ; ye Differences between ye said Rector of Prestwich & ye Parishioners of Oldham might be friendly decided.”

Ano. Dni. 1665.

“The Churchwardens at their presentments immediately after Easter presented the above said Rector for some mis-carriages concerning ye Parish of Oldham in Ano. Dni. 1664.”

The above is a most interesting document as disclosing not only the relation of Oldham to Prestwich at that time, but also the religious attitude of mind towards the Puritan invasion.

The time of the petition was four years after the restoration of the Church and monarchy, and so reveals that, notwithstanding the long and strenuous efforts to imbue the Oldham people with Puritan and foreign ideas of Church order and doctrine, there remained a strong, vigorous element loyal and true to the principles enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer.

THE PUBLIC BENEFACTIONS.

1704. SAMUEL HAWARD'S CHARITY.

A yearly rent charge of £15 to be distributed annually; and he directed that out of the said rent charges his trustees should buy yearly 20 BIBLES, to be distributed to the poor children of such poor persons inhabiting in the township of Oldham who should constantly on the Lord's-day go to church or some legal assembly for Divine Worship, and there reverently behave themselves, morning and evening; but that no such child should have a Bible till he or she could say the Church or other Catechism by heart, which Catechism he ordered his said trustees to buy for such poor children out of the said rent charges; and he directed that 20s. should be paid out of the said rent charges to the Minister of Oldham, or some other able minister of the Church of England, as his trustees should yearly think fit, for a sermon to be preached on the first Wednesday after Michaelmas-day; and that all persons in Oldham township receiving the benefit of his charity should be present at such sermon, unless some excuse should prevent; and he also directed that his trustees should meet yearly in the last week in September, to consult about the best way of disposing of the monies arising by the said several rent charges, according to the directions of his will, and that every trustee so meeting should receive 2s. 6d. to defray the expenses of such meeting; and that all the residue of the said several rent charges (all reasonable charges touching the execution of his will being deducted) should be yearly employed in buying woollen cloth to be distributed yearly, in the last week in September, to such poor persons inhabiting within the township of Oldham, as the trustees should think fit, and that no profane or idle person, or wandering beggar should receive any benefit of his charity.

1704. JOHN TETLOW'S CHARITY.

John Tetlow, by his will dated 10 Aug., 1704, gave after the decease of his wife all the land which he had purchased from John Cooper to the poor of the town of Oldham for ever, the yearly profits thereof to be disposed of by the then minister of Oldham, and the yearly churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the said town as follows:—The child of some poor necessitous person to be yearly bound apprentice to some sufficient trade or calling, and the overplus to be given yearly to the poor of the said town on St. Thomas's Day for ever.

By this will the annual profits of 9 closes were to be distributed by the curate, churchwardens, and overseers amongst the poor of the town of Oldham: first by apprenticing poor children, and then in gifts of blankets, linen, and calico on S. Thomas's Day.

1747. SCHOLES' CHARITY.

Oct. 1.—Indenture made between Samuel Scholes of the one part and the Rev. Jacob Scholes and four others of the other part. The said Samuel Scholes, for settling and assuring the several yearly rents thereafter mentioned for charitable purposes, granted to the said Jacob Scholes and others, and their heirs, a yearly rent of £12, to be issuing out of a messuage and tenement in Glodwick, and the closes thereto belonging, containing by estimation 15 acres large measure; and a yearly rent of £4, to be issuing out of the several messuages situate in Church Lane and High Street, Oldham, upon trust, that for or towards the salary of a school master who from time to time should be nominated by the Trustees and should reside in the township and should carefully teach there, such and so many poor boys and girls to spell and read English, the trustees to pay to such schoolmaster for the instruction of every such child any sum not exceeding 2s. a quarter. And if there should be any overplus remaining except the said 24s. remaining, the trustees should lay the same out in buying clothes for so many of the said poor children as they should judge to stand most in need thereof.

The trustees were directed to meet twice in every year in the Church or elsewhere in Oldham, on Whit Monday and the Monday after Christmas Day, for the purpose of managing the charity, and that their proceedings should be entered in a book to be kept for that purpose, and the costs of every such meeting should be defrayed out of the rents, provided they should not exceed 12s. at any one meeting.

And it was provided that no child under the age of five years, or that should be maintained in the workhouse in Oldham, or whose parents should neglect frequenting the Church, or some other place of religious worship, on Sundays, or should be remiss in supporting their families, should be admitted to partake of the charity. The trustees, when reduced to three, the survivors should nominate others having estates in Oldham of the clear yearly value of £20, as would make up the number to six.

1749. EYRE'S CHARITY.

In the Parliamentary Returns of 1786, this legacy is stated to have been given in 1728. The book produced to the Charity Inquiry Commissioners (1826), containing an account of the distribution of it, commences in 1749.

Timothy Eyre, of Hollinwood, by his will, ordered his Executors to put forth and continue at interest a sum of £100, and to distribute the interest yearly, on Christmas Day, amongst such poor persons, inhabitants within the township of Oldham, as should have no relief from the town, in such manner as they should think proper; and after the decease of his Executors, he directed that the Vicar, Curate or Parson, that should for the time being preach and reside at Oldham, should put out and take care of the said £100, and distribute the interest thereof to such poor persons as he deemed fit.

1640. POOR'S FIELD CHARITY.

Jany. 12.—Edmund Tetlow the elder and Edmund Tetlow the younger, in consideration of £20 granted and enfeoffed to Edmund Walker and his heirs, a close called the Great Meadow, lying near Fogg Lane, in the parish of Oldham, and abutting at the east part of the said field upon that lane, containing two acres, or thereabouts, on trust, that the rents and profits thereof should be received by the churchwardens and overseers of Oldham, and their successors, for ever, to the intent that they should dispose out of the rents and profits, yearly for ever, to the poor inhabitants within the town of Oldham, 28s. 8d. per annum, and to the poor inhabitants within the town of Royton, 3s. 4d. per annum, and that during such time as the said sums of 28s. 8d. and 3s. 4d. should be paid to the said churchwardens and overseers, and until default of payment, the said Edmund Tetlow the elder, and Edmund Tetlow the younger, might occupy and enjoy the said close; with a covenant from them to pay to the churchwardens and overseers yearly, out of the rents, the said two sums, or to permit the said Edmund Walker and his heirs to receive the same out of the rents, for the use of the poor within Oldham and Royton.

1755. WALKER'S CHARITY.

July 7.—John Walker, by his will bearing date 7th July, 1755, gave to four Trustees £600 upon trust, to put the same out at interest, in such security as they should think proper; and to lay out the interest yearly for the benefit of poor children residing in Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham, and Saddleworth, in buying books, and causing poor children to be taught to read, and say the Catechism of the Church of England. The legacy was laid out in the purchase of stock in the Navy five per cents., and there was recently standing in the new four per cents., in the names of the Trustees, the sum of £951 os. 10d. The dividends, amounting yearly to £26 os. 10d., are disposed of as follows:—To a Schoolmaster at Lydgate, Saddleworth, £4—, at Delph, Saddleworth, £4—, at Hollinwood, Oldham, £7—, in the town of Oldham, £4—, and at Ashton-under-Lyne, £8—total £27. In 1824 there was a balance of £25 15s. 5½d. in favour of the Charity. No books have been given away of late years; but it seems that part of the balance in hand might be well disposed of for this purpose. In 1819 the sum of £9 1s. 2d. was expended on a new trust deed. Previously to the payment of the sums above mentioned to schoolmasters in Saddleworth and Oldham, a list is required of the children taught in each school respectively, on account of this bequest.

From this Charity an annual sum of £7 is paid to the master of Hollinwood School for teaching twelve children; and an annual sum of £4 is paid to the master of a school in Oldham for teaching nine children to read.

1758. MARK NIELD.

1758. April 19.—Will of Mark Nield.—An Intended Benefaction to Oldham Church.

In the name of God, Amen. I thought it best to rite my Will and mind while I was in my helth and sound understanding. It is my Will and mind to have my just depts pade and my funerell expenses pad or anething that I owe of ane kind. And at my Desese if my Wyfe be alive I give her all I have while shee liveth. That is my Wyfe Elisebeth Nield I give and bequeath all I have that is mine monne and moneworth while shee liveeth. And at our disease then I give to all that my Wyfe and I my selfe are one Uncule and ant to, I give those nine Fifty pounds every one alike if the be alive. And if the be deed then it must gwoo to there child or children or there nexte Relations to be devided among them. Thof is Thomas Ashton and his Sister Elisebeth Chaddick and James Buckley and John Buckley and Elisebeth Potter and Theophilus Ogdin and Elisebeth Mill and Mare Ogdin and Mrs. Ann Bowers (These nine must have all alike) One thousand sevene hunderden and fifty eight, April ninetent. These nine wich I have mencioned must have every one fife pound ech of them. And when I ham ded and gone then I apoynt my Exceters to buld a Bay long at the easte end of the Housing. And I likewyse give to the CURAT of OULDHAM twente shillings every Year on Ascencion Day to preach a Sarmond on that Day, and His Text must be "Let evreything that bath Breath prase the Lord." And I likewyse give to the CLARKE of OULDHAM Three pounds every year to keepe the CHIMES in the Hole in good Tune to play the forte Psalms and the ninet second Psalm. If he keepe them in good tune he must have three pound evre year. And if the be not kept in good Tune that monne must goo to pay the poore Children there Scoole wages, it must be pade on Ascencion Day. And I likewyse give to the SINGERS, that is the Singers that sit in the GALLERY at Ouldham Church, the Socyety, I give them three pound evre year to come on Ascencion Day, to sing Prases on that Day. And that three pound must be as the magarryty think fit for promoting of singing Psalms to Allmyty God. The Singers three pound must be pad on the twentit fift Day of December evre year. (This monne wich I give to the Curat and the Clark and the Singers must be pade of this Housing where now I live in), the Housing must be kept in good repaire and the Rent must be pade according to the Leese. And thes Legetis must be continued as long as the Leese of my house lasteth. And when I myself and my Wyfe are ded and gone then my Exceters must acte according to my Will and showe there accounts to the Curat and Clark. And if the two not acte accordin to my Will the must not stand, but the Curat of Ouldham and the Clark of Oldham must be the ones me Exceters to dwoo as it is menciond in my Will. But those nine persons that I lefte fife pound ech of them fife it must be pade in twelve mounthes after our Desese. And what overpluch of Mone or Good there is beside must be divided among these nine persons evere one alike. But when the Bay of build is bulded then the Singers must

have there three pound mad up five pound a year Allways. But if one of our Relations be discontent at what I give them, Give them one Shilling and no more. That is my Will.

All this Housing wich is mine must gwoo as it is mentioned and what overpluch there is beside paying the Curat and the Clark and the Singers must gwoo to pay poore children there Scoole wages at after all is discharged. This House and all Conveneances must gwoo as it is mentioned. And I give to the INFIRMARY in MANCHESTER fite pound in Monney in a years time after my Wyfe and my desese. My Relations must have nothing to dwoo with my Housing nor ane thing belonging me whate our Relations must have must be in monne and goods.

This is my Will writ with my one hand, Mark Neild. And I apoynt my Wyfe Elizabeth Neild to be sole Exceter if shee be alive when I am deed. And after my Wyfe Desese I apount James Buckley and Theophelus Ogden to be my soles Exceters after our Deth.

MARK NEILD.

Seled sinde and delivered in the presence of Test.

Thomas Whitehead.

James Mills.

Edmund Whitehead.

The intention and good example of these ancient benefactions are surely a cause for serious reflection for us in these days, as it will be noted that none of them are later than the middle of the 18th century, and as late as 1789 Oldham had only a population of 8,000. But the chief public endowments of this character which Oldham possesses to-day are largely benefactions which we owe to the 18th century, when Oldham was a comparatively small and poor town.

Since then the community has enormously increased in population and wealth, and large fortunes have been accumulated both by individuals and corporate bodies, and enormous revenues are taken yearly out of the commercial resources of the community, but up to the present day there have been no conspicuous and corresponding acts of personal generosity at all commensurate with the wealth that has been made in the community.

Indeed, it has been alleged that there is no town of corresponding wealth and importance which has so few public institutions and endowments resulting from private benevolence. This may be a fault of youth, for Oldham is still young as a great community, and this unfortunate comparison may yet be corrected ; but there is one particular misfortune which has befallen Oldham, which threatens to be serious in its results, and that is the ever-increasing tendency of the wealthier classes to move away and be non-resident.

There, perhaps, was never a time when it was more important for all classes of a community to meet together and share in common interests and intercourse, and it would be difficult to imagine a town that would benefit more from such social intercourse than our own.

At all events, we shall close with the aspiration that these examples of public benevolence on the part of Oldham townsmen in the 18th century may inspire a similar sense of responsibility towards the community by the means of which their wealth and ease has been accumulated.

X.

CONCLUSION.

The story of any ancient church and parish is really the story in miniature of the nation and of the Church of England, and when the story runs back into the centuries, as our own does, every stone of the ancient fabric is a living parable of the throbbing life which has been enacted within and without its walls, for so closely woven into the texture of our English race is the influence of her religion that England knows no real history anterior to her Church.

And as a great Churchman has just said :—" Our Church is a national Church, not because the nation created it, but because it created the nation. Our Church is a national Church, not because the nation endowed it with property, but because it endowed the nation with learning, light, and liberty, and it will continue to be the national Church as long as the nation recognises that it is primarily a divine Church."

As we have had already to say, the further we pursue our story back into the past the dimmer the light becomes, and the slenderer the tale to be told ; indeed by far the larger part of the records in our possession are those which stretch between the 16th and the 18th centuries, and cover the moving periods of reformation in religion and revolution in state.

As we have already noted by the changes wrought both in the ordering and worship of the Church and the

opposing influences of Puritan and Anglican incumbents amongst the clergy, our own Church witnesses to the severe struggle of the 16th and 17th centuries, which was really deciding whether our grand old Church of England was to retain her place and heritage in the great Catholic Church of Christ or to be reduced to a mere sect by being dominated by a new foreign influence in religion as alien to her genius and heritage as was the great See of Rome from whose gradual domination she was struggling to emancipate herself.

* "So began the long war between the Church of England and Puritanism—a war not for toleration, but for ascendancy, a war on each side to crush the other out of existence in the national Church. On the side of the Church were the traditions of historical Christianity, the framework of Catholic order and discipline, a Prayer Book of Catholic doctrine and ceremonial, and the strong support of the Crown and Government. On the side of Puritanism was the definite, logical, concentrated, Calvinistic system of doctrine on which it rested, the lofty and uncompromising if somewhat hard character which Calvinism tended to produce, and the strong love of personal and national liberty which quickly associated itself with Parliamentary opposition to misgovernment, and turned the members of a sect into the champions of the nation."

And so the strife went on until the King was dethroned and executed, the Church displaced from her authority, and Presbyterianism established in her place.

* "Puritanism had thus succeeded in doing by force what it had failed to do by argument and persuasion. In alliance with the military revolution in favour of the supremacy of Parliament in the state, and supported by the potent army of the Scots, it had at last succeeded of deposing the Catholic Church from being the Church in

* Wakeman's History of The Church of England.

the nation recognised by the law, and had erected a Presbyterian Church in its place. For fifteen years, in the eyes of the law, the religion of England was Presbyterian, and the Church of England became, like the Roman Catholic Church, a religious body without legal rights and subject to legal penalties. But many circumstances combined to prevent the full Presbyterian system being established in its integrity all over the country. It was by no means popular in England, except in a few places, such as London and Lancashire. When it was first imposed by authority in 1646, the war was hardly over, and it could only be established in those parts of the country which were wholly in the hands of the Parliament. By the time that the war had come completely to an end in 1648, the increasing virulence of the attack upon monarchy had driven many of the staunch Presbyterians over to the side of the King, and the final triumph of the army in the second civil war was the triumph of independency, and not of Presbyterianism.

. . . As a matter of fact, except in London and Lancashire, and perhaps in a few other places, ecclesiastical anarchy reigned. A great number of the Church clergy were dispossessed in 1643, owing to their refusal to take the Covenant; still more were ejected when the use of the Prayer Book was made penal in 1645. Some of the benefices thus vacated were filled by the patrons with Presbyterian or independent ministers who had been ordained by the Presbyteries, or, in many cases, had not received any form of ordination at all. Some were simply seized by men who made themselves ministers of the vacant parishes without any lawful authority whatever. Many remained vacant for a long time. In some cases the Church clergyman, ousted from his benefice, opened a school in the parish, or was appointed by a friendly squire to be tutor to his family, and thus managed to keep touch with his old congregation and administer to them the sacraments. In many cases the Church clergy were never interfered with at all, and complied with the demands of the law, if desired, by simply reciting the Church services from memory instead of using the Prayer Book."

And as illuminated by our own parochial story, "Mr. Thomas Hunt" is a forcible example of the aggressive Puritan who will not wear even a surplice in conducting divine worship, and is summoned before the Bishop of Chester on the charge of violating the liturgy and ceremonies of the Church, but who has no intention of separating himself from the Church of England; whilst "Mr. Robert Constantine" represents the Presbyterian minister of the period of the Commonwealth and the nominee of the Classis and the Presbytery, and as such would probably have no attachment, by training or tradition to the liturgy of the Church or Episcopal order, hence we can understand when at the Restoration it was required that all "clergy must give complete allegiance to the restored Prayer Book and Episcopal order" that a conscientious Presbyterian like Mr. Constantine would have scruples upon matters of principle which the possession of his incumbency could not outweigh, and which he would rather sacrifice than his principles, and so, like many others, chose to separate himself from the order and discipline of the Church of England.

On the other hand, no parochial story could present a stronger type of the traditional English Churchman than Dr. Lake affords. Never inclined to the Puritan aims, he nevertheless accepted with perfect loyalty the changes which the learning and needs of the Reformation was gradually evolving, and so with robust conviction helped to maintain the old English heritage of Catholic faith, order, and sacrament as these principles are enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer, and when at last ousted from his cure of Oldham he retired to the lodging still known as Bishop Lake's house at Chadderton. Local

tradition preserves the story how, as the friend of the Squire of Chadderton (Mr Edmund Assheton), he ministered in his small lodging to those loyal members of his old flock who still resorted to him, and whose zeal in turn for the old faith outstripped their fear of fine and imprisonment.

And so the story goes on with equal evidence, alas ! of the deadness in spiritual life of the 18th century, and the increasing spirit of Erastianism both in clergy and laity, until times which bring us very near our own ; and just as the sturdy dislike of change preserved the religion of the neighbourhood for a long time from the influences of Calvinism and Puritanism, so the same conservative forces in the temperament of the people made them slow to be influenced by the Evangelical revival of religion in the middle of the 18th century, and we have it on record that one of the followers of Wesley was badly treated on attempting to minister in Oldham, and only protected from violence by the efforts of the then parish clerk.

And so again when the great Oxford movement began in the first quarter of the last century, it had to wait for 70 years before any perceptible sign of its influence could be traced in our own parochial story. But how much it has done and is still designed to do for the full recovery of spiritual power in our beloved Church is graphically described in the following words :—

* “ During the last five-and-twenty years the High Church revival has become the dominant force in the Church of England. The question therefore naturally arises, What is the special gift which it has brought to English religious life ? What is the real secret of its power ? Each revival of religion in the Church brings

* Wakeman's History of The Church of England.

into fuller recognition some special side of the mind of God. What is it of His purpose which the Oxford movement in its full development has made its own? The answer will be found in its largeness of view. It sought to take the whole of man and deal with him, and not only one portion of him. It did not so much supersede the Caroline, Latitudinarian, and Evangelical movements as supplement them. It aimed at assimilating what was best in them, and adding something of its own. It recognised that man's capacities are intellectual, moral, æsthetic, social, as well as spiritual and humanitarian. It strove to show that in the Catholic Church all these capacities found their appropriate home. It brought to the acceptance of Englishmen a wider scheme of theology and a more comprehensive scholarship than they had yet known. Starting with the object of defending the Bible from rationalistic attack, Dr. Pusey and the Tractarians were led to restore to English theology the true conception of the Church. In the true conception of the Church their successors have found their greatest security against attacks upon the Bible. It laid the basis of Church order and position on historical fact, and claimed for its defence the witness of the ages. It offered a conception of the Church which was at once absolutely loyal to Catholic principles and historical facts, and yet wider in scope and more fruitful in possibilities than any theory which had as yet commanded the allegiance of men. It welcomed the increase of knowledge from whatever quarter it might come, as being of necessity a further revelation of the mind and purpose of God. It pressed into its service all that was beautiful and ennobling in the arts, and taught that the æsthetic gifts of man were to be consecrated, and not suppressed. It sought in its teaching about the Church and the sacraments to sanctify common life, and lead the baptized to realise and use the capacities for holiness which they already possessed. The power to become the sons of God, it said, belonged not to the predestined or converted few, but to the whole company of the baptized through their union with the living Christ, the Head of His Church. As a member of that Church, each one,

however humble, had part and share and sympathy with the faithful who had gone before him, and fellow-worship with all the company of heaven. It offered to the devout and spiritual a special vocation of obedience, of self-discipline, of retirement, of service, in the consecrated life of the cloister. It applied itself to the training of individual souls in the spiritual combat. It awakened afresh the sense of corporate duty between man and man as fellow-members of the family of Christ. It took man as he was, and consecrated all that was strongest in him. No man has become the weaker for submitting himself to the Oxford movement. There are many whose moral failure dates from their renunciation of it.

“From the point of view of history the Church revival of the present century is seen to be nothing more than the complete reaction against the Protestant movement of the 16th century. From the moment that it became clear that Protestant theology and discipline were not going to oust the Prayer Book from the religious life of England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, that reaction was certain. English Churchmen could not continue long to use the Prayer Book and remain either Lutheran or Calvinistic. The reaction began with Hooker and Bancroft and the canons of 1604. It was developed by Andrewes, and Herbert, and Donne, and Laud, and Jeremy Taylor. It reached considerable proportions in the days of Sheldon, and Cosin, and Ken, and Wilson. But it had neither time nor opportunity fully to develop its own principles, either in its theology, its worship, or its relations to the State. The long political war with Roman Catholicism, which lasted from 1570 to 1745, made its conception of the Church insular and narrow. The influence of Puritanism made it often minimise its teaching of the sacraments, and shrink from asserting its rights in the matter of worship, in the interests of peace. The political difficulties under which it laboured made it too ready to seek the assistance of the State and rely too little on its own spiritual powers. Thus the Caroline revival was far from being complete when the whole movement was checked by the Latitudinarian and Evangelical influences of the 18th century. The Tractarians

took up the movement where Ken and Sancroft had laid it down, and in their hands and in those of their successors it has naturally developed, in the broader knowledge and freer life of the present day, to a clearness of statement, a largeness of view, a boldness of claim, and a width of sympathy which earlier ages could with difficulty have accepted.

“If the revival of the present century means anything at all, it means the complete restoration of the balance to the point which it had reached when foreign Protestantism began seriously to influence the English Reformation. It means the restoration of the Church of England to the position which it held when Edward VI. came to the throne. It means the repudiation of the teachings and the systems of Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin, and the claim of legal, historical, and actual continuity with the primitive and the mediæval Church. It means that the Church of England is reformed because it has purged itself of mediæval abuses, restored the Bible to its proper place in the religious life of the Church, adopted vernacular services, and declined to recognise the claim of the Pope to be universal bishop. But it means none the less that she is essentially Catholic in the fulness of historical right and regained practice.”

We have all noticed at some time or other how very different the prospect of a landscape is when we can look at it from some elevation. So all true history must be written at a distance. Then, and only then, do great and little matters assume their true proportions, and when from some distant peak of time we are helped to look down the long path of the past we see “how through the ages the Church of God has moved majestically on towards the goal of ultimate perfection, assimilating slowly from each century what is good, rejecting painfully what is bad, that each little life as it passes, each little institution as it lives, brings its quota to the common stock, aids or retards the common end.

“Each statesman and each reformer brings his humble product of work imperfectly done, and God, the great Organiser, accepts all, purges all, and disciplines each part to its appropriate end.” So, too, the humblest of us is inspired to put forth such moral effort as will in the end make us not unworthy sons and daughters of that part of the Church Catholic in which in the providence of Almighty God He has been pleased we should be born, our dear mother the Church of England.

OLDHAM :

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